Matthew tells us that Jesus feeds the crowds who have followed him because he is moved with pity for them. The earlier version of Mark is even more descriptive: Jesus’ heart is moved with pity for the vast crowd, for they are like sheep without a shepherd (Mk 5:34). Jesus has the heart of a shepherd who goes out to the flock. In John, in fact, Jesus is the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep and who lays down his life for the flock (Jn 10:14-15). So what Jesus does in the Gospel story is exactly what the Lord, the Shepherd of Israel, does to the individual and the community. He lets the sheep graze in green pastures; he sets a table of food before the people (Cf. Ps 23).

Curing the sick and feeding the vast crowd (in Mark, Jesus also teaches them at great length) are works of Jesus as Teacher and Prophet, and, not to mention, as Shepherd. We recall here the figures of the prophets Elijah who raised to life the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:22-23) and Elisha who multiplied 20 barley loaves to feed 100 men (2 Kgs 4:42-44). Most of all, we recall Moses who made possible the gift of manna in the desert and the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.

But Jesus is not some kind of stockroom or vending machine which gives automatically whenever people approach it for any need. He is not the ultimate problem solver of hunger or destitution. The crowd think he is, and so in John’s version of the feeding, they move to carry him off to make him king, so they won’t be hungry anymore. But Jesus withdraws to the mountain alone (Jn 6:15). On the mountain, where he feels most his closeness with God in prayer, Jesus understands who he is and what his real mission is. His mission is to give life—abundant life—to men and women. Abundant life, however, is not just about addressing hunger and thirst, but the deeper longing of the human person, the longing of the human spirit, the longing for God. Earlier, when Satan tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread, Jesus declined because “man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God” (Mt 4:4). There is more to food than bread, however important bread may be. Man also needs food for “eternal life”—life of value and possessing meaning, life with God. Eating during meal time is not merely a bodily function; it is also spiritual nourishment, since it embodies thanksgiving, fellowship, and communion. When we Filipinos eat together at fiestas, or share food after a funeral, we do so not only to satisfy our hunger but to manifest our sharing in the joys and sorrows of our communal life. Parents tell the children to say grace before meals, to behave at table, and not to waste food because it is something sacred; moreover, they have to remember those who do not have enough to eat.

So the feeding of the multitude in a deserted place is not just a matter of addressing people’s hunger. The fact that Matthew points out Jesus’ actions—taking the loaves and fish, looking up to heaven, saying the blessing, breaking the loaves, and giving them to the disciples—as the very actions Jesus will do at the Last Supper (Mt 26:25) tells us that the gift of bread is the anticipation of Jesus’ gift of his Body and Blood. John is even more direct: the multiplication of the bread is but a prelude of Jesus’ self-revelation as the Bread of Life.

But even so, the gift of the Bread of Life in the Eucharist is not the ultimate gift, the ultimate goal. It foreshadows, anticipates, and guarantees “eternal life” that we will have in the kingdom of God. There, God and the Lord Jesus will be all for all. Everyone will sit at the heavenly banquet, symbol of perfect satisfaction and happiness. There, God will fill up every emptiness in the human heart.

— Fr. Gil A. Alinsangan, SSP

**Facing Challenges with Faith**

Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

Speaking to all of Asia’s peoples in 1981, John Paul II highlighted various challenges. “In recalling the great spiritual and religious traditions of Asia, and in urging fraternal collaboration among all its inhabitants, I would also address the problems that still face the many nations of Asia and the continent as a whole.”

“Poverty still weighs heavily on large groups and classes in many countries. ... Hunger is still a tragic reality for many parents and children, as is the lack of decent housing, health care and educational facilities... Justice and equality demand that each nation and the international community as a whole assume their part of responsibility for the development of Asia in true international solidarity. Such solidarity is based on the fact that all peoples have equal dignity.”

“True development depends on the personal commitment of the men and women that compose the community... From the humblest rural laborer to the person in a high position of responsibility, all men and women must be conscious of the common good and strive to promote common progress in social and economic development.” Indeed, interfaith collaboration can and should contribute significantly to social progress!
The Introductory Rites

Entrance Antiphon
(Ps 70[69]:2, 6)
(Recited when there is no opening song.)

O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me! You are my rescuer, my help; O Lord, do not delay.

Greeting
(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P — The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
All — And with your spirit.

Introduction
(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P — In the Lord’s Prayer we pray: “Give us today our daily bread.” When we ask the Father for bread, we acknowledge our creatureliness and our dependence on the Creator for our life and its sustenance.
Today, as we celebrate St. John Baptist Marie Vianney Sunday, we ask the intercession of the saint to seek not only for what sustains our body, but also for what uplifts our spirit.

Penitential Act

P — Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. (Pause)

P — You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy.
All — Lord, have mercy.

P — You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.
All — Christ, have mercy.

P — You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy.
All — Lord, have mercy.

P — May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.
All — Amen.

Gloria

All — Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P — Let us pray. (Pause)

Draw near to your servants, O Lord, and answer their prayers with unceasing kindness, that, for those who glory in you as their Creator and guide, you may restore what you have created and keep safe what you have restored.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
All — Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading (Is 55:1-3) (Sif)

Isaiah pictures the Lord as a generous provider, inviting us to life and happiness. We must turn to him who alone fulfills our deepest desires.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

THUS SAYS THE LORD:
All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat; Come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk! Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what fails to satisfy? Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare. Come to me heedfully, listen, that you may have life. I will renew with you the everlasting covenant, the benefits assured to David.

— The word of the Lord.
All — Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 145)

R — The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.

Sr. M. C. A. Parco, FSP

1. The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and of great kindness. The Lord is good to all and compassionate toward all his works. (R)
2. The eyes of all look hopefully to you, and you give them food in due season; you open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. (R)
3. The Lord is just in all his ways and holy in all his works. The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth. (R)

Second Reading
(Rom 8:35, 37-39)

The apostle Paul is so taken by this thought that he sings his assurance: nothing can ever separate us from the love of Christ!

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

BROTHERS AND SISTERS:
What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or
nakedness, or peril, or the sword? No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

— The word of the Lord.
All — Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Mt 4: 4b) (Stand)

All — Alleluia, alleluia. One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Mt 14: 13—21)

P — A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.
All — Glory to you, O Lord.

WHEN JESUS heard of the death of John the Baptist, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. The crowds heard of this and followed him on foot from their towns. When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, "This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves." But they said to him, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have here." Then he said, "Bring them here to me," and he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over—twelve wicker baskets full. Those who ate were about five thousand men, not counting women and children.

— The Gospel of the Lord.
All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (Sit)

Profession of Faith (Stand)

All — I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

(At the words that follow up to and including and became man, all bow.)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P — Our Lord Jesus Christ nourishes God’s hungry people. In the Eucharist he provides for the needs of his Church. He sends us, his disciples, to bring the Good News to all. With confidence in his great care, we pray to the Father through him:

R — Nourish your people, Lord.

C — May our Church leaders and missionaries follow Jesus’ example of true pastoral service that the Gospel may more fully penetrate the life of humanity. We pray: (R)

C — May our government officials care for the poor and the needy through meaningful and effective programs of employment, housing, education, and land reform. We pray: (R)

C — May we always seek the things that will nourish us to live meaningfully in this world and for the Kingdom. We pray: (R)

C — May we never hesitate to share whatever little we have for the good of communities who are in dire need of our help. We pray: (R)

C — May the needy, the suffering, and the dying experience your great love and providence through the care of people around them. We pray: (R)

C — Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (pause). We pray: (R)

P — Bless your people, heavenly Father, so that filled with your good gifts, we may go on multiplying them for others. Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Presentation of the Gifts

(Stand)

P — Pray, brethren...
All — May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the
praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P — Graciously sanctify these gifts, O Lord, we pray, and, accepting the oblation of this spiritual sacrifice, make of us an eternal offering to you. Through Christ our Lord.  
All — Amen.

Preface VI: The pledge of the eternal Passover

P — The Lord be with you.  
All — And with your spirit.  
P — Lift up your hearts.  
All — We lift them up to the Lord.  
P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
All — It is right and just.  
P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.  
For in you we live and move and have our being, and while in this body we not only experience the daily effects of your care, but even now possess the pledge of life eternal.  
For, having received the first fruits of the Spirit, through whom you raised up Jesus from the dead, we hope for an everlasting share in the Paschal Mystery.  
And so, with all the Angels, we praise you, as in joyful celebration we acclaim:  
All — Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.  
(Kneel)

Acclamation (Stand)

All — When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord’s Prayer

All — Our Father…  
P — Deliver us, Lord…  
All — For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion (Kneel)

P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.  
All — Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon (Wis 16:20)

You have given us, O Lord, bread from heaven, endowed with all delights and sweetness in every taste.

Prayer after Communion (Stand)

P — Let us pray.  
(Pause)  
Accompany with constant protection, O Lord, those you renew with these heavenly gifts and, in your never-failing care for them, make them worthy of eternal redemption. Through Christ our Lord.  
All — Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P — The Lord be with you.  
All — And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

P — Bow down for the blessing.  
(Pause)  
Bestow pardon and peace, O Lord, we pray, upon your faithful, that they may be cleansed from every offense and serve you with untroubled hearts.

Through Christ our Lord.  
All — Amen.

P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.  
All — Amen.

Dismissal

P — Go forth, the Mass is ended.  
All — Thanks be to God.