

Americans are some of the most loneliest people on the planet. In most societies, people don't experience loneliness as acutely as Americans do. "In other cultures, people are rarely alone, physically or emotionally. Relatives, neighbors or even strangers are a normal part of everyone's life." Stone observes, "Not so in America!"

Our individualism, (our me-and-mine culture) and our wealth limits our contact with others ... to our detriment. This problem of friendlessness exists even in our churches. In The Friendless American Male, Larry Richards is reported as saying that "in church we sit together and sing together and greet one another cheerily as we leave at the end of the service. We (can) do all these things, sometimes for years, without forming any real personal Christian relationships. Our words often seem superficial. The Church can be for some of its members a place where Christians live alone together. Attending church may allow us to hear a great sermon and sing rousing songs, but we are missing out if we are not also befriending and relating to each other in deeper ways."

We know that Jesus said, "I came that you might have life and have it to the full". If his words are true, then what makes us lonely and blocks us from making deep and lasting relationships that reflect the very love of the Trinity? ... may I suggest that it may just be our individualism and our wealth.

On this our parish feast day of the Body and Blood of Christ, let us look at today's gospel and we see how individualism and the fear of the loss of their wealth causes the disciples of Jesus to almost lose an opportunity to experience and share the Good News.

- The disciples had been sent out by Jesus on mission and had just returned from a missionary journey. He is taking them to an out of the way place to be with him and to regroup. They want some quality time with the Lord all by themselves.
- Then a crowd of people find out where Jesus is and come seeking him.
 - And what is the disciples' response? They are probably pretty discouraged; their me-and-Jesus time is slashed to pieces. They want Jesus all to themselves.
 - Notice Jesus' response to the arrival of the crowd: he immediately begins preaching to the crowd and starts healing those in need. He models the outpouring love of God in the Spirit.
- After spending most of the day with the crowd, the disciples encourage Jesus to send the people away so that they can get something to eat.
 - "We don't have enough food, only five loaves and two fish"; they want to protect the little they have for themselves, the little wealth they have.

- **And what is Jesus' response to the disciples? He tells them, "Feed them yourselves! Open your hearts and share what you have!"**
- **Then he goes about modeling for his disciples how to act:**
 - **He takes hold of all his wealth, the bread and the fish.**
 - **He gives thanks: all we have is a gift from God.**
 - **He breaks: He is willing to share from what Father has given him.**
 - **He shares generously and invites his disciples to do the same.**

(Pause)

Please take up and look at the picture of Jesus feeding the poor of the world which you received when you came into church today. (view the picture).



- **In it we see people of every culture and nation; everyone is included.**
- **We see every day food: water and wine, and fruit...and of course, bread and fish.**
- **We see the wounds of Christ as a sign of sacrifice of all that he has and is;**
- **We see the Face of Christ reflected in the cup.**

- For the artist, we are to be the face and hands of Christ today feeding the world.

This picture has been purposely placed on the wall in our Eucharistic chapel next to the tabernacle. Just as Jesus invites us ponder his continual presence with us in the form of bread and wine in the tabernacle; so does he invite us to experience his love and communal life by breaking our bread and making friends with all the people of the world

To do so will demand that we hand over our individualism and isolation which is, of course, incompatible with belief in a God who is a Trinity of love. And it may demand that we share our wealth of time and talent and treasure, no matter how little our wealth may be, because it is central to happiness in Christ, it is central to the Jesus sharing his body and blood with us, It is central to forming a Christian community is sacrifice.

Christ sacrifices himself for us: "This is my body given for you; this is my blood poured out for you." And we are to sacrifice ourselves for one another in his name: "Do this in memory of me."

(Pause)

I experienced something similar to Jesus the feeding of the 5,000 the other last Thursday evening. It was a stormy night and we had gathered to plan a neighborhood park clean up. In spite of intermittent driving rain, 45 people gathered in the Rainbow room; Lots of trash needed to be cleaned up. Lots of homes to be attended to. O'Hair Park, in an 80 acre park, the largest park in Detroit surrounded by homes. The city had long neglected the park because of its size. As we sought resources for such a large undertaking, people kept getting up and offering the little they had.

- Officials from Wayne County donated to deliver and pick up 4 dumpsters
- Retirees from GM stood up to say they would be coming to the clean up with 10 students from Henry Ford High School and bring a pick up truck.
- A man who runs a Non profit in the city said he would come to cut grass
- A member of a fraternity at Wayne State University spoke up and said he would get between 20 and 40 of his frat brothers to come; they would also bring garbage bags and gloves.
- 30 residents who live in the square mile around the park, some of whom are members of our parish, spoke up and said they were there willing to be part of clean up and pass out 400 fliers in their neighborhoods.

- One of the women said that Foodland on 8 Mile was donating food and drink.
- A staff member from State Representative Cavanagh's office stood and said he is willing to donate \$100 for costs.
- I announced that the Sisters of Charity Foundation giving a grant of \$5,000 to help cut grass and have a celebration event later this summer.

Earlier in the day, Miriam, our secretary received a call from an older woman in community. She couldn't make the meeting but wanted say how delighted she was to see that someone was finally attending to the needs of the park. She had waiting for so long for action on the park.

(Pause)

By brothers and sisters, just five loaves and two fish. That's all we have. Just five loaves and two fish. Just one life: that's all each of us has, just one life.

We honor today Sr. Stephanie. Just one life: 29 years as principal and 12 years as pastoral associate. Just one life. And almost every morning she gathers around the altar of the Lord to offer sacrifice with the Lord. The other day as we gathered for weekday Eucharist, she noticed the picture of Christ feeding the people of the world was missing. The picture is part of her interior life. Unlike many Americans, she is not isolated, she is not alone, and she is not rich either! But she continually bonds herself with other sisters ... and brothers ... to share in the miracles of the Lord.

We gather today to celebrate our Corpus Christi Feast Day, the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is God's will that no one leave hungering for anything. May all of us find fullness and abundance so that we too may go forth from this celebration and be the source of life for our world.

The Lord said, "Feed them yourselves". And this is how you feed them: you take whatever gifts you have; you give praise and thanks for all you have been blessed with; you break; and you give.

And don't worry, trust me, you will have enough.