

Come, Eat! ~ July 31, 2011
Matthew 14:13-21; Psalm 17:1-7, 15

It seems like the story of the feeding of the five thousand is a perfect fit for a Sunday on which we celebrate the sacrament of communion. Our sacrament represents a time when the community comes together to share a meal in the name of Jesus. It is a time when we are called to set aside all differences of opinion and to find what is common among us and what unites us. It is a time of sharing and caring.

It was the same for those who had gathered to hear Jesus and who settled down for a meal the disciples were certain could not be provided. There was just not enough food.

This story is often referred to as the “miracle of the feeding of the 5000.” But many, since that time, have called it “the miracle of sharing.” And, it most likely is. And, maybe, considering human nature, that is the greatest miracle of all. A miracle far more powerful than the ability to stretch a few fish and loaves into a feast for all so that there was even food left over.

Many have reasoned that people would have packed a lunch to take with them as they followed Jesus from place to place. So, when the time came for a meal, they all sat down, opened their lunches and shared them so all were fed. They did not focus on differences in the person sitting next to them, they had no concern for political affiliation or religious faith. They didn't care if someone was conservative or progressive. They saw one another as humans desiring to learn a new way to have a closer walk with God. In this man, Jesus, they saw the way that would bring them to being the very best humans God wanted them to be. Their desire was to be among other people who hoped for the same thing.

Most likely, as they sat and ate, they talked to one another, trying to digest all the spiritual food he was giving them. Is there anything better than a conversation over a meal? The exchange of ideas and the opportunity to both speak and listen intently is enhanced when we sit to eat together. I have had many meals that have allowed a wonderful give and take—a time of peace, calmness, focus and contemplation. Nothing is better.

Perhaps, someone should suggest that the folks in Washington have a picnic, a time when they are more inclined to share food and ideas without some of the nastiness that has been flying around--nastiness that seems to flow most abundantly from the hearts and minds of those who term themselves “Christian.” Perhaps, if they sat down together for a peaceful meal they might actually see one another as human beings, united for the common good.

Gathering at our communion table, we recall who brought us here and why. We remember that we are to remember him and all he did for us. We are to recall the words and deeds of wisdom he set forth for our development and, resolve, that, through this sacrament they are renewed within us. This is a meal we share, as simple as it is. He who beckons us to “Come, Eat!” feeds us with far more than bread and wine. He nourishes us with all we can become in life and leaves the decision to move forward in peace and love and kindness up to us. As we take these elements into ourselves, we need to remember that, in doing so, we make Christ part of us. Then in turn, we share all we have learned and we reveal him to others in all we say and do and think. -- *Amen*