

# ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

17<sup>th</sup> Sunday in  
Ordinary Time, B  
July 25, 2021

Fort Yuma, California | P. O. Box 1176, Winterhaven, CA 92283

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Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa  
Pastor

Entrance Hymn: : 793 —  
Table of Plenty.  
Holy Communion: 820 —  
One Bread, One Body.

## SATURDAYS:

3:15 pm to 4:15 pm – Holy Hour  
3:45 pm to 4:15 pm – Confessions  
4:30 pm – HOLY MASS

## SUNDAYS:

7:15 am to 8:15 am – Holy Hour  
7:45 am to 8:15 am – Confessions  
8:30 am – HOLY MASS

**St. Thomas Indian Mission  
will be celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary or  
Centennial Celebration next year — 2022.**

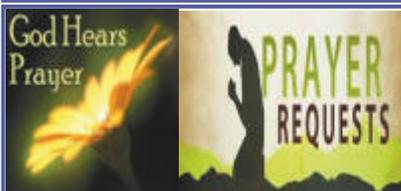
We would like to plan some events to celebrate as  
well as to generate some funds for the Church.

We are having a meeting today, Sunday, July 25th,  
in the Church, at 9:30 AM  
or right after the 8:30 AM Mass.

We are encouraging you to come to the meeting,  
hear the ideas/suggestions gathered at the brainstorming  
session last June 27th and share your ideas.

We need help in all areas of the events, so we are  
asking you all to get involved and help make our 100<sup>th</sup>  
Year Celebration a great success.

**If you can't attend the meeting but you're  
interested in helping, please put your name and  
phone number on the sign-up sheet located at the  
entrance. We will make sure to contact you.**



Please include in your  
prayers those who are in  
poor health, especially  
*Maria Atalig*



COLLECTIONS  
for Parish Support:

July 17-18: \$1,020.00  
Via online: July 18-21: \$245.00

## UNIVERSAL PRAYER

### CELEBRANT:

The psalmist told us that God answers all our  
needs, so we voice with confidence our needs and  
the needs of the world.

### LECTOR:

- 1) For God's holy Church, for Pope Francis and  
for all of us—for faithfulness among us to be  
a eucharistic people, to share what we have to  
feed and sustain those most in need, let us pray  
to the Lord.
- 2) For leaders of nations, especially our own, for  
all places in our world where violence destroys  
human dignity, for laws and policies that  
protect all of life, from the womb until death,  
let us pray to the Lord.
- 3) For courage to build bridges of understanding  
among people—patience to accept human  
imperfection and humility to envision a world  
at peace, let us pray to the Lord.
- 4) For those who worry about many things, for  
surrender and for trust in the Lord to feed us  
and sustain us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 5) For those who work the land and farm our  
fields, for all whose efforts nourish human-  
kind, for renewed commitment to care for the  
earth, God's gift to us, let us pray to the Lord.
- 6) For the sick of the parish, for those who live  
with addiction or face depression, for families  
who love them, let us pray to the Lord.

### CELEBRANT:

Loving God, source of all life, hear our prayers.  
Help us surrender to your grace so that we, who are  
fed at your table, may feed others who yearn for  
your peace. Fill our hunger with your love, trans-  
form our worries with your grace. Send us to live  
the faith we profess. We ask this in the name of  
your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## **The Mystery of Faith:**

**We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess  
your Resurrection, until you come again.**

## **THE READINGS. . . SOME REFLECTIONS. . . AND GUIDEPOSTS.**

### **Introduction to the Liturgy of the Day**

“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts,” we hear from time to time, meaning that a collection of things put together can be greater than what would be expected when each is alone. Today we hear two accounts of times when a seemingly inadequate number of loaves of bread provided plenty for a huge crowd to eat. We hope to exemplify the same saying when we join together as Church — the Body of Christ.

May the Eucharist that we celebrate nourish us and strengthen our bond as a parish family -- the tangible local witness of the Universal Church.

### **First Reading: 2 Kings 4:42-44**

A man came from Baal-shalishah bringing to Elisha, the man of God, twenty barley loaves made from the first fruits, and fresh grain in the ear. Elisha said, “Give it to the people to eat.” But his servant objected, “How can I set this before a hundred people?” Elisha insisted, “Give it to the people to eat.” “For thus says the Lord, ‘They shall eat and there shall be some left over.’” And when they had eaten, there was some left over, as the Lord had said.

*The Word of the Lord.*

### **Responsorial Psalm:**

**“The hand of the Lord feeds us;  
he answers all our needs.”**

Let all your works give you thanks, O Lord, and let your faithful ones bless you. Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might.

**R.**

The eyes of all look hopefully to you, and you give them their food in due season; you open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

**R.**

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: Ephesians 4:1-6**

Brothers and sisters: I, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

*The Word of the Lord.*

**Lector:** Alleluia, Alleluia. **All:** Alleluia, Alleluia.

**Lector:** A great prophet has risen in our midst. God has visited his people. **All:** Alleluia, Alleluia.

### **Gospel Reading: John 6:1-15**

Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd followed him, because they saw the signs he was performing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, and there he sat down with his disciples. The Jewish feast of Passover was near.

When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip, “Where can we buy enough food for them to eat?” He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, “Two hundred days’ wages worth of food would not be enough for each of them to have a little.”

One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what good are these for so many?” Jesus said, “Have the people recline.” Now there was a great deal of grass in that place. So the men reclined, about five thousand in number.

Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to those who were reclining, and also as much of the fish as they wanted. When they had had their fill, he said to his disciples, “Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted.” So they collected them, and filled twelve wicker baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves that had been more than they could eat.

When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, “This is truly the Prophet, the one who is to come into the world.” Since Jesus knew that they were going to come and carry him off to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain alone.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

### **THE MIRACLE OF SHARING**

The five loaves and two fish were enough to feed the 5,000 people. Incidentally, this is the only miracle (other than the resurrection) that is recorded in all four gospels (See Jn 6:1-15; Mt 14:13-21; Mk 6:30-44; Lk 9:10-17). And Matthew and Mark tell us about Jesus feeding a great crowd miraculously a second time (See Mt 15:32-39 and Mk 8:1-10). It must have been an awesome event to have been spoken of six times in the gospels. Not only that, a similar miracle is recounted in the book of Kings, which we hear today as well.

*In the first reading,* Elisha takes an offering of twenty barley loaves and shares it with one hundred people, that is to say, with many more people than it

Would be expected to feed. All ate plenty and some was even left over.

**In the Gospel**, Jesus takes five barley loaves and two fish and is able to share them with over five thousand people. All ate their fill, and twelve baskets were filled with the leftovers.

God is able to provide more than we need, despite all appearances to the contrary. As we sing in the psalm today, "The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs."

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The miracle in today's Gospel is one of sharing, a miracle that consists in commending into the hands of Jesus all that we are and all that we have, no matter how little that may be before the eyes of people, and the Lord will do the rest. *Five* (loaves) and *two* (fish), are SEVEN. The number seven signifies completeness or perfection. ***A perfect offering to God is the offering of one's whole self.***

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The detail about the boy who was willing to share his small meal (five loaves and two fish) is a beautiful and meaningful one. John tells us it was barley loaves. This was the bread that the poor ate. This detail shows us that an essential virtue of a true follower of the Lord is the willingness to share. **A true follower of the Lord never feels that he/she is so poor that he/she has nothing to share.**

In today's world God continues to feed six billion people with enough food, but we're not doing very good in sharing what we have. For all kinds of reasons, many people suffer starvation while many others suffer from diseases triggered by having too much to eat.

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**As Jesus feeds the 5,000, we are reminded of our call to share our resources with others. Realizing this, we should be aware not only of what we use but, more importantly, the things we waste. With Jesus, nothing should go to waste. Instead, it should be given to those in need.**

A story is told that an ambassador from a poor country had an opportunity to travel to a big metropolitan city. While there, this foreign diplomat was given the "red carpet treatment." After a two-week stay, the ambassador was escorted to the plane. As the diplomat boarded, a reporter asked, "During your stay in our country, what was it that impressed you the most?" Smiling at the reporter, the diplomat said, "I was impressed with your trash cans." Bewildered, the reporter asked why. The ambassador said, **"Because with all the food you toss out, I can feed my people with it for a long time."**

**The image of the boy who shared his meal also shows that whatever we are willing to give to God will come back to us many times over.**

It took trust on the part of the boy to give over to God the little he had. It takes trust to give to God the little we feel we have to offer in terms of time, talent or treasure, but it works. God can do a lot with the little we are willing to give.

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**John's Gospel does not use the word "miracle."** He calls it a sign as we heard today: "when the people saw the sign he had done." A sign is something that seeks to communicate some deeper reality to us. John is very explicit and expansive about what the multiplication of the loaves and fishes is trying to tell us. It is for this reason that for the next several weeks, the gospel readings will continue to be from John's much longer version of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes and what it all means.

### **The Miracle of the Changing of Selfish People into Generous People.**

There are those who see in this miracle something which in a sense is perfectly natural, and yet which in another sense is a real miracle. Picture the scene.

There is the crowd; it is late; and they are hungry. But was it really likely that the vast majority of that crowd would set out around the lake without any food at all? Would they not take something with them, however little? Now it was evening and they were hungry. *But they were also selfish.* And no one would produce what he had, lest he have to share it and leave himself without enough.

Then Jesus took the lead. He began with a blessing over the little that was available. And thereupon all were so touched by Jesus' action that they began to share, and before they knew what was happening, there was enough and more than enough for all.

If this is what happened, it was not the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fishes; it was the miracle of the changing of selfish people into generous people at the touch of Christ. It was the miracle of the birth of love in grudging hearts. It was the miracle of changed men and women with something of Christ in them to banish their selfishness. If that be so, then in the realist sense Christ fed them with himself and sent his Spirit to dwell within their hearts.

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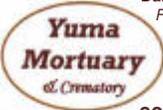
**Finally, the fact remains that our Lord not only fed the 5,000 people, but he also continues to feed us in a more marvelous way in the Eucharist.** May we recognize how the Risen Lord's presence in the Eucharist makes us more aware of our Lord and strengthens our commitment to serve not for personal gain but solely for the greater honor and glory of God.

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