

The twelve baskets

Peter's eyes were glazed over. He seemed to be in shock, jabbering and muttering to himself as he filled his basket with chunks of bread and pieces of fish which the crowd had been unable to eat.

"I know there only five loaves to start with!" he told himself, trying to reason it out. Yet, the ground was still covered with crumbs. Seeing the white crumbs on the ground made him remember how God had showered manna onto the desert to feed his wandering forefathers. Peter's basket was nearly full but he still had much more to pick up.

Glancing at the adjoining section of people, Peter saw his brother Andrew also harvesting bread crumbs. Then he turned and continued to gather.

Darkness was closing in and soon all twelve disciples returned to Jesus bringing their brimming baskets of what was left from the five loaves and the two fishes.

Jesus slowly looked over the twelve baskets that had been set before him. The lines of exhaustion were set deep in his face. He still mourned the news of John's death at the hands of Herod. The relentless hounding of the people had consumed what was left of his energy. He rose and touched the baskets—mute evidence of his great miracle. The disciples around him stood in silence. No-one seemed able to believe what had just happened.

Jesus' then went around and touched each of his twelve followers, laying his hand on their backs and gripping their sturdy shoulders. As he did so, Jesus was thinking of a final breaking of the bread they would share all too soon.

"I need some time," Jesus said to them. "You go ahead without me. Take the boat and leave for Capernaum. I'll be along later."



Jesus continues to feed us with the Eucharist. This miracle story invites us to join the disciples in the realization that God will take care of us. At this time in our lives we may be in a "deserted place." We may think that we are far from any help. We may feel abandoned and hopeless. But Jesus is with us, the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He is present in every moment of our life. He empowers us to take our meager resources and multiply them by our faith and by our action.