

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John 6:1-21

Keep it at a 1000 word limit.

Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has **five barley loaves and two fish**. But what are they among so many people?" Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about **five thousand in all**. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Sermon

I believe in miracles. I believe in miracles because they happen all the time.

In today's gospel we hear of Jesus feeding 5,000 people with only five loaves of bread and two fish.

And he had leftovers!

In Hawaii, everything is centered around food. If we're invited to a party our first question is "What should I bring?" We love it when aunty makes her special potato macaroni salad, or uncle makes his smoked fish. Or if you're like me, you buy a tray of food from Zippy's. After the party everyone is sent home with even more food!

But in the midst of all this abundance there are many who go hungry.

As a former teacher, I remember a student whose mom volunteered in my class. Our program provided free breakfast and lunch to the students and volunteers. One day on a walking field trip in the community, the little girl pointed to the forest behind the school and said that's where I live. I said I don't see a house, is it farther in? Her mom said, no, you see the big tree? That's where we live. I saw the tree and a plywood board leaning against it that sheltered and housed their family. The mom said she loved the meals at school because that was all they ate.

Years later, while meeting friends at a restaurant, a young woman was introduced to me. She had the same name as my student that lived under the tree. She had the same blond hair and green eyes. She stared at me and I stared at her. Could it be? She gasped and said, “Mr. Hee!” She was healthy and happy, and her mom was also doing well.

I have seen change and that is a miracle to me.

Just last week I went to eat lunch with other retired teachers, as we retired people like to do. I didn't finish my lunch and took the rest home. I was stopped at a traffic light in Kapahulu and saw a homeless man sitting on the sidewalk.

I waved and he came over and I said I have some fish and french fries, would you like some? He smiled and said, “That’s my favorite!” He eagerly started eating and waved at me as the light turned green. Not only was he happy but I had a big smile on my face. Jesus fed the masses but I was able to help one person, sometimes that’s all you can do.

I can make a change and that is a miracle to me.

One day I was waiting in front of a restaurant on a bench in Kalihi. As usual, I was on my cellphone checking Facebook. A disheveled man was riding a child’s bike on the sidewalk in front of me. He rides closer to me and stares at me—which made me a little nervous.

I put my phone away because I thought he was going to steal it out of my hands. He parked his bike right next to me and went into the restaurant. I watched him through the window. He was talking to the hostess and she went into the kitchen. She gave him two large bags. He came out and the bags were filled with oranges. The man stared at me again, and said, “you want?” My mind shifted completely, he saw me as needy and offered what he had.

A simple act of kindness is a miracle to me.

A couple of weeks ago, Fr. Moki and I returned from the General Convention in Austin, Texas. There were many homeless people in the area that asked us for money each time we walked to and from the

Convention Center. One night our Hawaii group gathered for a Chinese dinner and since we ordered way more than we could eat, we had a lot of leftovers. We packed it up in takeout boxes and we handed them out to the same folks we walked by everyday.

Sharing and living aloha is a miracle to me.

Communities are also taking action. Markets and restaurants are starting to donate food at the end of the day instead of throwing it out. Schools are also doing their part. In certain areas they serve free summer meals to make sure kids are fed year round.

Many of us take for granted that we can eat what we want, whenever we want, and wherever we want.

Can we feed our hungry just as Jesus fed the masses?

It might take a miracle. And I believe in miracles.

For I have seen Jesus change hate-filled relationships into loving ones. And I have seen him turn fear into courage, and despair into hope.

So this week, be generous, feed someone, and believe in miracles.

Amen.