

Illuminating the Mission

Day Five • Page Five: Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes

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In Mark's gospel, Jesus' heart is moved by a group of people who are hungry. Upon receiving the request to let the people go and buy food, Jesus tells his disciples to feed them. With five loaves and two fish, Jesus and his disciples feed the crowd. This beautiful illumination captures the multiplication of the loaves and fishes with its abundance of gold and color that consumes much of the page, alluding to the abundance at the divine banquet. Today, our world contains a much larger crowd of hungry people than the 5,000 that Jesus encounters in this story; close to one billion people go hungry each day.

In his Message for World Food Day in 2013, Pope Francis called world hunger a global scandal. Many of us who live in developed countries view food as a luxury and have access to it in abundance. Catholic Social Teaching and Pope Francis remind us that the primary function of food is to nourish our bodies and sustain life. Food is a basic human right for all people. We each have a responsibility to heed Jesus' instructions that he gave to his disciples when he said, "You give them something to eat" (Mk 6:37). There are many ways in which we can help: participation in a local food shelf, getting involved with national relief efforts such as Catholic Relief Services, and being conscious of personal food consumption and waste, just to name a few. How will you respond to Jesus' call to feed the crowd?