**Reflection for the 8th Sunday of Trinity 2021**

**John 6: 1-21**

This well-known story appears in all four of the Gospels. It is John's version that we are looking at this morning. John goes into greater detail than the other gospel writers. It is an interesting passage filled with all sorts of questions and queries.

The crowds gather: they are following Jesus, they have heard of the miraculous healings, they follow him out into the hills. Jesus asks Philip ‘Where are we going to buy bread for all these people to eat?’ As if he did not know. We assume that Jesus did not know what was going to happen, then again, we cannot be sure of that - so was this just a test for Philip? Philips’s reaction ‘Six months wages wouldn't feed this lot.’ Another disciple, Andrew says, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish.” It is only in John that this boy is mentioned. We might ask why? Could it be that children were considered to be invisible, of no account? It is this young lad’s packed lunch which provides the basis for this miraculous event. The way I picture it unfolding would be something like this: Jesus just starts to divide the bread loaves, a few here, a few there. I cannot imagine that it would have been some huge explosion of loaves just like magic popcorn appearing with a puff and a bang. Just a gradual dividing what was there until everyone has eaten their fill. A quiet revolution which many of those present would have been unaware of.

We often look for outside answers to our problems and needs. We look for a fairy godmother or a knight in white armour charging across the horizon. Sometimes the answer to our needs is around us. maybe we need to be looking at what we have, sharing what we have. The Liberation Theology movement in South America works on this basis. Some priests came to the realisation that the solution to the problems of the poor and exploited lay within themselves. They began to tackle basic problems; oppression, violence, domination, marginalisation. They were able to show how the Christian faith can be an agent in promoting social and individual liberation. How faith and politics relate and how the gospel involves the struggle for social justice.

The solution to many of the ills of society, the problems that we face, could well lie within ourselves. The bread that was offered by the boy in this story was small and on its own could not have fed many. It is only when the bread is placed in Jesus’ hands that it divides and divides, again and again. It is only with God’s help that we make progress. It is only when we place things in his hands and say” Help!” that we may find our way. All too often we struggle on desperately trying this and that becoming increasingly frustrated and depressed, when what we need to be doing is to stop to think and be ready to say in our prayers “Help – we need help” and be ready to listen to the answer. The listening is important.

***God of mercy****,*

*Whose amazing grace empowers us to follow in your Son’s ways,*

*Set out your requirements for us,*

*however difficult they may be.*

*Please forgive us for the times we try to figure out this life on our own.*

*We need you,*

*we need you to give us strength, wisdom, and direction.*

*We know that through your Church,*

*and with the help of your Holy Spirit,*

*we can rise to the challenges we face.*

***Amen***