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The miracle of the loaves and fishes foreshadows the Eucharist where multitudes are fed on the Living Bread from Heaven. Being nourished on heavenly Bread should help focus our minds more sharply on those on our planet who are short of earthly bread. *The Holy Father has said that 'participation in the Mass should challenge us to address social inequalities in our world where people have insufficient bread for themselves and their families.'* He goes on *'to ignore them would mean becoming like the Rich Man who pretended not to notice the beggar Lazarus, lying at his gate'*. Is there anyone 'lying at our gate' at present whom we tend to overlook whether in our family, our neighbourhood, our nation or the wider world?

However, Blessed Mother Teresa often spoke about the material poverty of the poorer nations as being a less serious issue than the spiritual poverty of the richer nations. Everyone knows we have a spiritual hunger which cannot be satisfied by material means. Maybe Covid 19 is teaching us something in this regard. "Man does not live by bread alone", Jesus reminded his adversary. We would never dream of denying our children ordinary food but it's a bigger sin to let them go without spiritual nourishment. What spiritual reserves are we bequeating to our children and grandchildren.

As well as that, Jesus tells us we are created for a life beyond the grave. He says: 'labour not for the food that perishes but for that which endures to Everlasting Life, the kind the Son of Man is offering you'. Not to see beyond the material world would be lethal, spiritually. It would mean we'd missed out on why we were created. An overly materialistic lifestyle would keep us more focussed on things rather than people. We might even be tempted to see people as commodities to be used and not as persons made in the image and likeness of God. Seeing the image of God in the face of our fellow mortals will prepare us for a face to face meeting with Him and hopefully them in the world to come.

In the Gospel today it is interesting to note that Jesus didn't perform a miracle with a wave of his hand. He needed human input coming in the form of a few loaves and fishes. It's the same with us. We come to Mass with our two loaves and fishes which could be translated into our paltry efforts at loving others. In the realm of love small acts of kindness speak louder than grand gestures. Jesus will know our good intentions and expand our capacity to love in a more unstinting way. God will not be outdone in generosity. "The amount we measure out is the amount we will be given back".

The Holy Father recently said: 'We come to the Mass bringing our whole life which includes the little loaves and fishes of our everyday self-giving and we go out from the Mass imbued with the riches of love which can only be found in Christ'.