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Uniting Word & World

For Sunday, July 26, 2015

Enough to Go Around

This Sunday's Scripture Readings

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

<http://new.usccb.org/bible/readings/072615.cfm>

2 Kings 4:42-44

Ephesians 4:1-6

John 6:1-15



Is there enough to go around?

Living in an industrialized nation, it can be easy to forget how much poverty there is in our world. With all the advances in technology over the past century, we might even be deluded into thinking that most people lead relatively productive and comfortable lives.

Unfortunately, just the opposite is true.

[According to the World Bank](#), seventeen percent of the world's population subsists on less than \$1.25 per day. An astounding 2.2 billion human beings live on less than \$2.00 per day. One quarter of the world's population [lives without electricity](#).

An estimated [six hundred million children](#) live in poverty and 6.9 million under the age of five died in 2011. An estimated twenty-four thousand children die

every day because of malnutrition or lack of health care. Almost one and a half million children die each year because they lack clean water. Over two million children die each year because they are not immunized. And fifteen million children are orphaned because their parents have died of AIDS.

As it turns out, most of the world lives in total and abject poverty.

The thought of billions of people starving to death and suffering because of untreated illnesses can overwhelm us. We might feel powerless to do anything about it, or believe we lack the resources to help all these people.

However, consider this. It is estimated that it would cost [\\$30 billion per year](#) to end world hunger. By contrast, Americans spend [\\$38.7 billion annually](#) on cosmetics including lipstick, hair gel, and deodorant. Pet owners in the United States spent [over \\$55 billion](#) annually on products and services for their dogs, cats and canaries. Most scandalous of all, it is estimated that Americans waste [over \\$161 billion](#) of food every year. Just the cost to throw all that food away is estimated to be around one billion dollars.

There is plenty to go around. However, we who have more than we need are failing to share it with others and, even worse, wasting it.

In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* we read: "In his use of things man should regard the external goods he legitimately owns not merely as exclusive to himself but common to others also, in the sense that they can benefit others as well as himself" ([CCC §2404](#)). While we have a right to our private property, we can never lose sight of the fact that the earth and her goods have been given to all of us. In a more pointed way, Pope Francis, in his encyclical, [Laudato Si'](#), references the bishops of New Zealand in asking, "What the commandment 'Thou shall not kill' means when 'twenty percent of the world's population consumes resources at a rate that robs the poor nations and future generations of what they need to survive'" (LS §95).

In this Sunday's Gospel, it takes a miracle for Jesus to feed the multitude. In today's world, it would only take each of us experiencing a change of heart to look upon all that we have as a gift to be shared with others. It would take redefining success not as having the most and the best of everything but as serving others even to the point of denying ourselves. It would take an end to our wasteful habits of showering every day, eating too much, and having too many clothes. I suspect that, if we take these steps, we'll discover that the hole in our hearts we were trying to fill with all those possessions will be more than filled with the sense of communion and solidarity we'll experience with our poor sisters and brothers and with our earth.

Douglas Sousa, STL

PRAYER

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,

to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.
—A prayer for our earth, Pope Francis, Laudato Si' §246.

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