

How Do You Feed a Hungry Heart?

Daily Gospel / Liturgical Cycle A

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Matthew 9:32-38

A demoniac who could not speak was brought to Jesus, and when the demon was driven out the mute person spoke. The crowds were amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He drives out demons by the prince of demons." Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and curing every disease and illness. At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest."

Introductory Prayer: Lord, I bring myself into your presence knowing the zeal of your heart for souls. The glory of your heavenly Father can shape my own heart. I am confident that I can throw off all that is lukewarm and tepid in my own soul today. I desire to fulfill the mission you have given me more perfectly.

Petition: Lord, grant me the grace of a renewed zeal for you and for bringing others to you.

1. The Prime Choice: So many of the moral predicaments men bring upon themselves are not, as some would say, the work of a "cruel" God. Christ's will is the happiness that people relentlessly pursue at heart. Yet a battle ensues in every soul: whether or not God may enter into the way we live that life. What Christ is not permitted to touch cannot be healed or redeemed. The Pharisees freely choose to live with demons rather than to live with Christ, rather than to let him take center stage. In our battle with our weaknesses and temptations, we should be sensitive to the truth that we will be confronted with the same choice. Will we be in "control" and live with our demons, or will we surrender to Christ totally and guarantee victory over every evil in our lives?

2. Seeing With Christ's Eyes: If we could open our heart to see what Christ sees, we would follow everyday what he asks of us: "Beg the harvest master to send out laborers to gather his harvest" (Matthew 9:38). To be sure, we must lend a hand in the mission, but we must also pray that shepherds are not lacking in the Church. If we could see with Christ's eyes, we would know that many are ready to fall into his arms with only the least motivation. No need for fancy discourses or rigorous apologetics. They just want someone to say, "This way," and they will follow. We should not fear being apostles; many more are ready for what we have to say than we think are ready.

3. Diligent Preparations: If we could see with Christ's heart, we would not show the least pessimism as we face the culture of death or the culture of the absolute self. We would know that Christ fully satisfies people's hunger for God in spite of their history of misery, pain or self-indulgence. Get ready: the farther people are from God, the more the signs of their need for him will show. Get ready with prayer. Prepare the emergency rooms of salvation where many patients will soon be left, for only through prayer will we be assured that doctors will be there to treat them and put them on the road to full recovery.

Conversation with Christ: Lord, I know how much you love all people and manifest that love by coming to us every day at Mass. In the Eucharist I meet the one that has so loved me; in the Eucharist I will beg you to meet the needs of my heart and of countless souls by setting fire for you in the hearts of many young people, so that they generously accept a mission to souls in your name.

Resolution: I will offer one hour of adoration this week for vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life.