

# Laetare

St. John 6:1-15

March 22, 2020

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**"If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"** That's the question asked in Psalm 11:3. And right now it feels like the foundations are being destroyed. The economy is in free-fall. States ordering citizens to shelter-in-place. Rumors of the National Guard being deployed in our streets. What happens when the money stops?

**"If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"** It's a rhetorical question that suggests despair. What can you do when everything you knew as normal is torn away?

But the rhetorical question comes after Psalm 11's initial statement: **"In the LORD I take refuge."** That is the foundation that cannot be destroyed; or rather, the LORD is the One who makes the foundation. When we say in English, "The LORD," what lies behind it is the Hebrew *YHWH*, "The One Who Is," in the beginning, now, and ever shall be, unto the ages of ages. He is the foundation, the ground of all being.

So Psalm 11 says,

- 1 In the LORD I take refuge;  
how can you say to my soul,  
"Flee like a bird to your mountain,
- 2 for behold, the wicked bend the bow;  
they have fitted their arrow to the string  
to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart;
- 3 if the foundations are destroyed,  
what can the righteous do?"
  
- 4 The LORD is in his holy temple;  
the LORD's throne is in heaven;  
his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man.

At its core, the question of the fearful is, "How will we survive?"

But the child of God says, "How can you say that? I take refuge in the LORD. I take refuge in the LORD even when He tests the children of man."

That's what's happening now. It is a time of testing. We knew that going into Lent, when we heard about Jesus being driven out into the wild places, to be tested by the devil. And in today's Gospel, Jesus Himself tests the disciples. **"He said to Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?' But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do."**

This is not a test of Philip's business acumen. It's a test of where Philip places his trust. That's what's going on now with this pandemic. I don't say that because of any special revelation. This day, this moment, is a call to us to pray again, **"Give us this day our daily bread."**

Philip fails. **"Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little."** That's around eight months' wages.

We shouldn't be quick to criticize him. Haven't you been wondering the same thing? "How will we eat? If this goes on, how will we pay the mortgage? Will the church shut down?"

But Philip, and we, should look to the rest of the crowd. They came because they saw Jesus healed the sick. While Philip looked to their financial resources, the crowd looked to Jesus.

Where will we get food to eat? The little boy brought what he had to Jesus. At a time when food was scarce, at a time when the temptation would be to hoard what you have, the little child gave what he had to Jesus, to share.

And Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, and gave it to His disciples. These words foreshadow the Eucharist.

Jesus gave thanks for what they had, and the Father gave them more, in abundance.

At this point, it would be easy to say this means that if we trust God, everything will materially be fine, we will prosper. We can look to the holy martyrs and see that is not the case. Many of the greatest saints lived in poverty. The test in our day is not to trust in God so our prosperity can continue. The test in our day is to trust God with our prosperity, and use it to His purposes. And when the time of adversity comes, repent for how we made prosperity our god.

The people with nothing came to Jesus in the wilderness, and they had everything. The ultimate gift of Jesus is not prosperity as the world counts it. Philip wanted 200 denarii—eight months' wages—but if we had all the money of Bill Gates, George Soros, and Mike Bloomberg combined, it would not give us life.

There's no vaccine for the Coronavirus. But there is a remedy for death. The Eucharist is life. The Mass is the medicine. The body of Jesus will raise you up at the last day. The blood of Jesus cleanses you from all sin.

So be not anxious. The foundations cannot be destroyed. In the LORD we take refuge. In Him will you live. In Him will you die. His shall you be forever. +INJ+

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

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