



BLESSED ARE THEY...

The St. Vincent de Paul Society

READ ABOUT THE INSPIRING WAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH OUR MINISTRIES AT HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

MATTHEW 14:13-21

IESUS FEEDS THE 5000

¹⁹ He gave orders that the people were to sit down on the grass; then he took the five loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing. And breaking the loaves he handed them to his disciples, who gave them to the crowds."

My Loaves and Fishes Story

Ron Van Nest, OFS

I had my first realization of the Holy Spirit working within our small parish St. Vincent de Paul Society after about three months of working with it. At that time, about fifteen years ago we had small quantities of money each week to work with and more clients than we could handle.

We typically had about \$500 from our poor box each week and many times five or more families to see who had financial needs – usually for utility bills and rent. In our area the rent is mostly for lot rent for a mobile home. One day we had a large number of clients and very little money. When I saw what we were facing I made the off-the-cuff remark that we were going to have to divide the loaves and fishes.

As our money rapidly dwindled I continued to say that we had to somehow divide the loaves and fishes. But it seemed that the more we divided, the more the money just diminished, until finally we had nothing left. Yet we had one more client to see. We prayed that perhaps she would not need money but might just need some advice and a prayer with us, as we do pray with all of our clients.

But that was not the case. She actually needed \$400 and she needed it that day. We asked her to step out of our room for a few minutes while we considered what we could possibly do. During that time our pastor came in and asked us how things were going. I told him, "Frankly, terrible." "Oh, why?" I told him that we have a client who desperately needs \$400 and we have nothing. He said, "Oh, how fortunate, just this morning a parishioner gave me \$500 to use wherever I thought it was needed. You can have it all."

With that we were able to give the lady the \$400 she needed, and our day was done. As we were gathering our things to leave a member of our group said to me, "Ron, you know how you have been talking all morning about dividing the loaves and fishes?" I said, "yes." Then she said, "Look at what we have, we have \$100 left over!" I said, "Oh, my God!" and I cried. I felt foolish, but I was so overwhelmed with God's generosity that I couldn't control myself.

Since then there have been so many events like that that I have come to expect them and hardly give them a second thought. When they occur I just say, "Thank you, God" and continue on with our day. We have had a crowded waiting room and run low on money and found that our last remaining clients have a need for only food gift cards which we *coincidentally* have in good supply; or we have found that our waiting room has thinned out as our clientele discussed their problems among each other and they self-selected themselves out of the money pool, telling those who remain to take it, "You need it more than I do."

We have learned week after week that there are no coincidences with God. For the last many years that I have been involved with this much blest group we have never had to turn anyone away because we had no money. God is *very good!*