God’s Overflowing Love

Compassion – Matthew 14:14-16

**14﻿ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ﻿15﻿ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.” ﻿16﻿ Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”**

*The word “compassion” is filled with rich meaning. In the original Greek, the word literally means to be moved in the gut; to have your insides ache. It refers to the inner organs. The Latin literally means to “suffer with, to feel the pain and suffering of another.” This word indicates an intensely emotional reaction of unbridled sympathy and heartfelt concern for another.*

The day begins with the news of the death of John the Baptist. John was Jesus’ cousin. John had baptized Jesus and had identified Jesus as “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) There was a strong relationship between these two people of God.

The day continues with the return of the disciples from a short-term missionary journey. They were very excited about their successes and Jesus wanted to spend time with them to hear their stories.

Following the disciples were five thousand men and their families. Jesus tried to get away from the crowd by crossing the sea, only to find the crowd waiting for him on the other side. He wanted to mourn John in solitude, but instead he was surrounded by people. He wanted time to think, but instead He had people to face. Like paparazzi of our day, crowds swarmed Jesus. Some were curiosity-seekers; others sought spectacle and amusement and some limped with legitimate needs.

Humanly speaking, Jesus needed a break and time to get his bearings. Jesus easily could have gone and hid Himself. He could have sent the large crowd away like the disciples suggested. (After performing great miracles by Jesus power on their trip, the disciples now had reverted to their weak human way of thinking.)

But Jesus’ compassion for people carried the day.

Swallowing his grief, Jesus continues touching the crowds with healing hands and teaching words.

He puts His own needs and those of His disciples aside so that He can minister to all these people.

Jesus continues to meet our needs even when we don’t even know exactly what we really need.

Prayer:

Lord, like your disciples, we, too, quickly forget that because of your Word and Sacraments you can do great things. Forgive our wavering faith at times and seek only the spectacular things of your ministry. Have compassion on us and help us to have compassion on those around us. Amen