

18th Sunday of the year homily 7/31/11

I have been thinking about buying a new car, an electric car.

Electric cars are a revolution in personal transportation.

No pollution

No dependence on foreign oil

Greatly reduced cost of fuel

Very quiet

Very dependable

But as I thought of it, there were two reasons I hesitate.

Can you guess what they are?

The price ...the initial investment

The availability of electricity (what happens if I am parked on a downtown street and my battery is drained of power? I can't simply drive into a GAS station.)

Yes, the attraction to the advantages of an electric car are many, but the cost and the easy access to an electrical energy source caused me to hesitate in investing in the miracle of a new electric car.

In today's readings, God is inviting us to invest not in a new mode of transportation but in a whole new way of living! Jesus has come to bring life in abundance.

We hear in today's first reading from Isaiah;

All you who are thirsty come to the water;

All you who have no money come, receive grain and eat.

Come without paying and without cost.

Ah yes! This is a new way of living.

St. Paul in his letter to the Romans says, "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Distress or nakedness or the sword..? No, NOTHING will separate us from the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The crowds who followed Jesus in today's gospel experienced this new way of living. They flocked to Jesus, even it meant going out into the deserted places.

But there are two reasons why Jesus' disciples, his closest followers, hesitate to buy into his way of living.

First of all, there is a great price a disciple must pay for this new way of living. Out in the desert when the people are hungry, Jesus says to his disciples: feed them yourselves. Just like paying \$42,000 for an electric car scares me, even more so did Jesus' challenge to feed the crowd of over 5,000 men along with the women and children. The disciples simply do not have those kinds of resources available...only two loaves of bread and five fish.

Have you ever felt that way? Have you felt your resources are too meager to follow Jesus command to feed the needs of others? We don't have to only look at the drought in East Africa to find people without food and drink. All we need to do is look at our family, friends and neighbors to be overwhelmed by their needs. Many of their needs are immediate and

seemingly beyond our resources.

And it is not simply people's physical needs which overwhelm us, it is their need to experience the unbelievable compassion of Christ through us...Jesus' disciples. Jesus says to his disciples... and to us **FEED THEM YOURSELVES!** Yes, there is a great price to pay for being a follower of Christ. Our first reaction may be like that of the first disciples...**SEND THEM AWAY TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES!**

But then Jesus teaches US how to find the resources we need. Jesus takes the little the disciples have...the two loaves and five fish... **FIRST** he **GIVES THANKS** to the Father who supplies all his needs,

and then he gives to his disciples so that they, now overwhelmed with God's compassion and care, have the energy and grace to give to others in need.

Is that not why we, the disciples of Jesus, gather here every week?

We gather to give thanks for all we have received and to gain the strength that flows from the risen Christ to be his disciples and feed the hungers of our families, friends and world.

(Pause)

I am still not sure about buying an electric car...even though I am seriously thinking about it.

However, I am convinced about paying the price to be a disciple of Christ. For when I let the love of Christ flow through me, I have the strength and energy and resources to do things others in our world would say are impossible.

