

Reflection for Sunday, July 25, 2021

The Seventeenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

from Jon Metz

I can still remember the taste of the loaves and the fishes. I know that is a weird statement because I was not actually present when Jesus performed his miracle of multiplication. I was however, given a book from my mom at a very young age that depicted this story with full color pictures. I used to read the book all the time. I read it so much that in a way it became tangible to me. I imagined being a young boy in the crowd and taking a piece of bread and ripping it and passing it to the next person. I imagined tasting the loaves and fishes. It is difficult to explain, but in my little brain I could taste the fish and bread. It was incredible. In this way the story became real to me. I understood it in an intimate way. It was probably the first Gospel story that I learned and internalized. I carry this passage with me in my spiritual memory.

Jesus' miracles can sometimes feel so miraculous and intangible to us today because we are so far removed. This disconnect can be minimized by our sacramentality. If we can connect to a passage tangibly through imagining a smell or a taste, we can get closer to the experience. The Jesuits call this *Ignatian Imagination*. The practice is to put yourself into the story to make it more intimate. You imagine the setting, feel the wind, smell the air, take note of the time of day, etc. This is yet another beautiful tool to help make our faith come alive. I didn't know it then, but I was putting this strategy into practice as a little boy, and it continues to be a powerful passage for me still to this day.

- What was the most impactful Bible story to you when you were little?
- Have you ever practiced *Ignatian Imagination*?
- How might you incorporate this practice into your own prayer life?