



My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In this Sunday's Gospel, Christ tells His followers, *"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."* (Matthew 5:14-16). Our Lord gives us not just a statement of philosophy, but a call to action.

This Sunday, we commemorated those Holy Fathers who acted as part of the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451. This Council was called to address a heresy, advocated by a presbyter named Eutyches, who claimed that Christ had only one divine nature. This heretical teaching gained many followers, including the Patriarch of Alexandria, who, like Eutyches, were sent into exile after the Council disproved their teachings. In this way, those holy Fathers also acknowledged the wisdom of St. Paul's advice to Titus in this Sunday's Epistle: *"After a first and second admonition, have nothing more to do with anyone who causes divisions, since you know that such a person is perverted and sinful, being self-condemned."* (Titus 3:10-11) The Church sets our understanding of

theology, not in a legalistic spirit, but so that we can truly feel the mystery, in which God willingly took on flesh to practice what He preached: glorifying His Father in Heaven as He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and even raised the dead.

In its own way, this is the perfect connection to next Sunday's Gospel, which tells us that Christ healed a large crowd, because *"...He had compassion on them..."* (Matthew 14:14). As the day ended, the Disciples worried about the responsibility of feeding these thousands of people. When they asked Christ to dismiss the multitude, He responded again with love and concern, *"They need not go away; you give them something to eat."* (Matthew 14:16).

St. John Chrysostom asks us to, *"Observe the wisdom of the Master; He says not straightway to them, 'I will give them something to eat;' for they would not easily have received this..."* Nature is only miraculously changed when the ordinary—five loaves and two fish—becomes extraordinary. St John continues, *"For five loaves to make so many loaves...is no less a thing than to bring fruits from the earth, reptiles and other living things from the waters, which showed Him to be Lord both of land and sea."* The King of all came to demonstrate God's mercy and love, and to teach us to do the same. *"By the example of the disciples, we also ought to be taught, that even though we have only a little, we ought to give to those in need. For when [the Disciples] bring their five loaves, they do not say, 'When shall we satisfy our own hunger?' but immediately obey..."* Christ's demonstrated His true Divinity, but the Disciples also showed patience, charity, and mercy towards their neighbors, by thinking of others before themselves.

In a way it is comforting to know that both this crowd and the Disciples—these first followers of Christ, had human weaknesses: hunger, exhaustion, and irritability. Christ, as Man surely felt tiredness and hunger; but as God, he saw the broken state of His creation and demonstrated the kind of behavior our Heavenly Father expects from all of us. For while men may turn away from their neighbors, Christ Himself will always be present, gently saying, *"They need not go away..."* As much as the Feeding of the Five Thousand is a miracle, it should also move us to ask ourselves whether we put the needs of others before our own?

**+SEVASTIANOS**  
**Metropolitan of Atlanta**