**Varansi Province of the Indian Missionary Society**Eighteenth Sunday of the year. (2020)Mt. 14/13-21

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Jesus Christ,

Years back one day a middle-aged woman came into the midst of the poverty and sufferings of one of the major cities in India. She saw the tragic situation and said to herself, “something's got to be done.” She took all the money she had and rented an old building with a dirty floor. The building wasn't much convenient but it would do. The next day the woman went around the neighborhood and offered to teach the children in the slums there.

She used the old building as her schoolroom. She had no desks, no chairs, no table. Her chalkboard was the dirty floor. She rubbed it smooth with an old rag and wrote on it with a stick. That was the way the woman fought back against the poverty and sufferings around her. It was a pathetic response, but it was the best she could do.

Whatever happened to that woman and her undertaking?

Today she has 5176 members, 40,000 volunteers in 137 countries all over the world, who runs thousands of non-formal schools, mobile dispensaries, leprosy clinics, homes for the dying and homes for abandoned children, homes for HIV Aids Patients, world wide. The woman, of course is Saint Mother Teresa of Kolkatta whom we know as Mother Theresa.

I can't think of a better story to illustrate the point of today's gospel reading. Take the gospel reading.

The disciples had five loaves and two fish and Jesus did the rest. He fed over 5,000 people. That's what Saint Mother Teresa did too. Her time, energy, her love for the poor and her zeal to share the love of Jesus with the poor where her loaves and fish. She gave Jesus her “loaves and fish,” and Jesus did the rest. He multiplied them way beyond her dreams.

It's the same point that Saint Pope John Paul 11 made to the young people in Edinburgh during his visit to Scotland in 1982. the Pope said to them: “Now the point I wish to make is this: the disciples in the gospel gave all that was available, and Jesus miraculously fed those 5,000 people and still had enough left over.

“It is exactly the same with your lives. Left alone to face the difficult challenges of life today, you feel conscious of your inadequacy and afraid of what the future may hold for you. But what I say to you is this:

“Place your lives in the hands of Jesus. He will accept you and bless you, and he will make use of your lives in a way that exceeds your greatest expectation.”

Today's readings invite us to look into our hearts and to ask ourselves this question. How much of our lives and our resources are we currently placing in the hands of Jesus to do with as he wishes?

To what extent are we giving of ourselves and our resources as Saint Mother Teresa did? In today's gospel Jesus is saying to us: “I need your talent. I need your generosity. I need you.”

“I need your feet. I need your hands. I need your tongue.”

“For today I have only your feet to carry me into the slums, the factories, and the offices of your cities.”

“I have only your hands to reach out to the helpless, the homeless, and the hopeless.” “I have only your tongue to tell my sisters and brothers why I came to live on earth, and why I suffered and died for them.”

In brief, the message of today's gospel is this:

Jesus invites us to cooperate with him in working miracles not unlike those he worked in biblical times. Whatever we give him – our time, our talent, our prayers, our sacrifices, our resources – he will use in a way that will exceed our greatest expectations. He will multiply them beyond anything we dreamed of, just as he did with the loaves and fish in today's gospel reading.

As a Missionary Congregation the IMS trains men and women to work miracles in others lives. The Varanasi province of the Indian Missionary Society has taken up the empowerment of the existing Christian communities and sharing the Word of God with the people of other faiths as one of our priorities in the missionary work. Our spiritual Centre in Varanasi, India, thousands of people belonging to other faiths come every Sunday to listen to the Word of God. They call themselves as devotees of Christ. We are unable to cater to all the spiritual and material needs of all these people. We need to train Animators on a regular basis to work miracles and care for all these people. We also work towards the social and economical betterment of the poor and marginalized with a special focus on the plight of women. On the onslaught of COVID -19, our Mission Centres our Social Service Centre and our Communication Centre catered to many needy people and migrant laborers with food materials and other necessary items. Being a missionary congregation we do not get any support from the local communities because all of them are either Hindus or Muslims or people of other faiths. The existing small Christian community, being poor and marginalized, depends on us for support. IMS has so far relied upon God's providence and the generosity of our benefactors. The support we receive from various like- minded organizations and benefactors is a great contribution for our missionary work. We do not have any major income generating institutions. All our missionaries work in the remote areas of rural India. By your prayers and financial help, the Archdiocese of Chicago becomes part of our effort to share the good news of Jesus to all. You can be sure of our regular prayers for the Archdiocese. I take this opportunity to thank each one of you and the entire Archdiocese for the spiritual and monetary support which you will provide to my religious congregation for the establishment of the Kingdom of God in this part of the world.