

I do not like to give dinner parties. Why? Well, I worry about several things. What will I cook? Will it turn out OK? Will my guests talk to each other or just sit there and stare? Will there be enough food? The last one is the main worry, even though it is the easiest one for me to take care of. I just cook a lot of food. On the rare occasion when I do have a dinner party, there is always way too much food and I find myself eating whatever was on the menu every day for the next week.

As I reflect on this issue, I realize I like to know that I have enough. Coming back from Costco with one of the giant packs of toilet paper makes me very happy and I don't think I am alone in this. When I visit Costco, there are many other people there – stocking up so that they have enough. There is nothing wrong with having enough, but it does seem to be a bit of an obsession in our society. We have to make sure we have enough for our family, for our retirement. We watch our possessions and our money closely so that we will have enough. I don't think we even know what "enough" is anymore. We just make sure we have way more than that and don't explore where that point might be. I am always struck by people who are homeless who tell me how they have come to realize how little can be enough.

There is a very strong theme of "Will there be enough?" in today's Gospel. Will there be enough for 5000 men plus women and children? That's a lot. Look around there are probably about 120 people here today. But Jesus seems to think it is possible to have enough food to feed more than 5000. Phillip carefully points out that six months wages would not be enough to feed all these people. Andrew has done an assessment and all he has found is a boy with five loaves and two fish – definitely not enough. This situation doesn't seem to bother Jesus. He has the crowd sit down and blesses the food and distributes it. It must have been a strange scene. The people, especially those in front can see how little food there was. Imagine how they must have felt when they saw Jesus starting to distribute the food. If the people in front of me got that much bread, how much will there be for me.

It must have been kind of like being in line at a buffet. You know how you watch the pan with the fried chicken and see the pieces start to disappear as you get closer and closer. You might even count to see if there is going to be enough by the time you get there and give nasty looks to anyone who takes two pieces. Most of the time there is the relief when someone shows up with a full pan to replace what is left. And that is what happens in this morning's gospel - the food keeps coming. Jesus keeps handing out food and there is enough. Imagine the amazement on people's faces when they received their food. There was so much that there were 12 baskets of leftovers.

The message of this morning's gospel is that there IS enough. Can we believe that? It is hard to believe that there is enough when we know that there are realities that if you don't make enough money, you get kicked out of your house. We know that there are many people who don't have enough food or enough money to have a place to live. How can we believe in Jesus providing enough when there is hunger and homelessness and poverty? It is a difficult question and I don't have the answer. I think the presence of hunger, homelessness and poverty has more to do with the sin of society and our inability to share our resources than with God's not providing. What I do know God has promised that there will be enough and that while we may not understand or see how that works, I know that God has promised the abundance of God's presence and when God is present, things we could never imagine can happen. We are very wary this message of abundance – "yes that's nice but I have got to be careful." But God dares us – God loves us and lures us into letting go, and taking that plunge to trust in that abundance.

Trusting in God's abundance takes prayer and practice and church is a great place to practice. If we cannot trust in God's abundance at church then how can we trust in it on our lives? I remember one event in my former parish that showed me that there is enough, especially when God is at work. I

was on the vestry and we had just gotten through a difficult budget year and were facing another difficult one. An opportunity came to buy the house across the street from the church and the rector and wardens presented it to the vestry. The vestry balked – for sure we needed the space – but to add another mortgage to our financial burden would be a lot. We discussed it. The building would provide not just space for our overflowing Sunday school and meeting spaces but a place to do outreach work, something that we had absolutely no room to do. We prayed for awhile, had some silence and then the vestry decided to purchase the house. I remember thinking what happened just now. Something had changed within me and the same thing seemed to have happened to the rest of the vestry. When the congregation heard about the purchase, they responded with hope and joy. This was a chance to reach out to the community – to have a place for an after school program and a community clinic. The church didn't go bankrupt and the money came in. I always wondered what would have happened if we had said no – what would have happened to our congregation who was hungry to reach out to those who lived around them? Would the pews have started to empty and the spirit that kept that church packed started to die? There is no way to know. All I know is that we took a risk and there was enough.

Worries about there being enough are very common for churches. Most churches don't have large resources. If we think about what is happening at Epiphany, I know we worry about there being enough to support all the ministries we do. If we think about what is happening at Epiphany, when it comes to the renovation of this church. How will we pay for it? How will we have enough to transform this space into a place serves the needs of this community and will continue to serve the needs of the community? We are not a large congregation with a lot of money. But God calls to us and God asks us to pray and discern so that the path we follow is not a rash one, but one grounded in prayer and listening. Our path as the people, who worship at Epiphany, is to be grounded in the presence of God and it is when we are grounded in the presence of God that amazing things start to happen. If we are afraid to take the step and let go of the fear of there not being enough, then that fear can tie our hands and deaden us and that might be an even bigger risk.

Jesus' message to us is that there is enough. Jesus says to bring your meager resources. Bring your 5 loaves and two fish and trust that Jesus will make it plenty. Bring your lives and all that you are. One of the places, where we get to experience there being enough, is at the Eucharist. When we come to the table and receive the body and blood of Christ, there is enough. There is enough room for all of us at the table and God invites every one of us no matter who we are. Christ has enough love for all of us and pours it out on us. We are called to trust - to trust in the same abundance that fed 5000 and more and still had 12 baskets of leftovers. We are called to trust in God's amazing love to transform us, our actions and the world to do God's work. Trust in God's crazy abundance. In God there is enough.