

## **BLESSINGS ALWAYS**

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Association Minister Message

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*COMPASSION.* “Jesus said to them, ‘They need not go away; you give them something to eat.’” *Matthew 14:16.* Much is being said today by those who judge and describe people in need as lazy, drains on the economy, and not trying hard enough to get out of their situations. Their comments are without any *COMPASSION* and often prejudicial. So often they begin their remarks by identifying them as “*those people*” who need to get a job since there are many job opportunities with good wages, or they should go back to where they came from. These attitudes lack *COMPASSION* with racial biases, fear, and lack of respect for those who are diverse.

Immediately before the passage from Matthew 14:13-24, Jesus received word that His cousin John (the Baptist) has been beheaded by Herod to please his wife Herodias who was offended by John’s “truth-telling.” After hearing about this, Jesus went to a place to be by Himself to grieve the loss of John. But the crowds found out where Jesus was and followed Him. Even though grieving, Jesus had *COMPASSION* on them and “*cured their sick.*” It was late; the disciples knew the crowd was hungry and they wanted to send the crowd away to find food. Jesus, again, had *COMPASSION*, turns to the disciples, and tells them to give the crowd something to eat. It was a crowd of at least 5000 men besides women and children. The disciples wondered how, since there were only five loaves and two fish.

The disciples are a lot like many today who do not think they have any responsibility for those in need. They wanted the people to fend for themselves, but it is Jesus who tells the people to sit down and in His *COMPASSION* Jesus performs a miracle: all were fed, and twelve baskets full of leftovers were gathered after all were fed. Jesus’ hospitality and love witnessed to Jesus’ *COMPASSION*. There were more leftovers than what was first offered. There was more than enough for all. In the midst of Jesus’ grief, there was miracle that overcame death, hunger, and need. As people of faith we are resurrection people who are made new, alive, and there is abundance, not scarcity. We are called to act with *COMPASSION*. All are welcome at Christ’s Table. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS.*