

*Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry?*

—Matthew 25:37

The first day of April is when we put out our hummingbird feeders where I live. Four parts water to one part sugar is the mixture, a rich energy cocktail for those tiny bodies that burn through so many calories in a day. If they don't come on April 1—and they usually don't—we at least know they'll be along soon. It's my goal to make our backyard a hummingbird paradise, with as many flowers and feeders as I can muster back there.

Funny thing though, the hummers don't always want to live in paradise. Though there is plenty of food to go around—believe me when I tell you!—the hummingbirds fight to keep one another out of the yard. Sometimes I think they would rather fight over food than eat it.

They are like us: plenty to go around, but they won't share. Hoarding what they don't need and denying it to others who do need it. In the image of God we are made, it's true, but we are also like the animals.

Our dual nature is easy to spot—the selfish part is obvious. Less so are the steps we take to overcome it, the generosity we muster when we are at our best. But we are more than our worst faults: Human beings band together to minister to the suffering, sometimes. All faith communities enshrine that impulse, and the scripture passage we reflect on today suggests that it, more than anything else, is central to our life in faith.

—Barbara Cawthorne Crafton