

*Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat."*

—Matthew 14:16

Sometimes the challenge of meeting the hunger of the world can overwhelm us to the point of despair. Whether we are confronted by the gaunt, homeless woman we pass in the street, the crowded room of guests at the parish soup kitchen or the news footage of those starving as a result of war or natural disaster, the solution seems beyond us, and our helplessness becomes the agent of our detachment.

Jesus, sensing the hunger of those gathered by the Sea of Galilee to hear him teach, instructed his companions to get some food and feed them. Staggered by the size of the crowd, the disciples were overwhelmed by the prospect and responded by distancing themselves from both the task and the people themselves, replying, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish."

But Jesus knew how to address hunger, both the physical hunger of the crowd and the spiritual hunger of the disciples: one person at a time. And he denied the power of evil the tool it often uses to keep us from even getting started—helplessness.

When we are not helpless, neither are those who need our help.

—Mark Hollingsworth Jr.