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-- Back in 2005, our diocese went through the painful process of closing and consolidating a large number of parishes. Some of you were affected by that process, especially if you attended the Lyons parish.

-- In East Toledo, one of the parishes closed was St. Louis, originally established as a French speaking congregation. Though the small Church was closed, one ministry of that parish continued, and the building was kept by the diocese for that purpose.

-- That ministry is the Helping Hands of St. Louis. Most people know it for its daily soup kitchen. But it also runs a food pantry, a clothing center, provides homeless kits and even conducts a nutrition course.

-- As followers of Jesus, we hear the words Jesus told the disciples in the gospel: *There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves.* And, like those disciples, we feel we have far too little to meet the need.

-- How often do we feel like we're being asked to do things for which we have inadequate skills? If any of you have been asked to think about teaching in the religious education program, I'm sure that thought crossed your mind.

-- Perhaps you've worked at festival, or in some parish ministry and you've been asked to take a leadership role. I myself have felt that sense of inadequacy, e.g., in the skills for ministering to the Spanish-speaking community.

-- There's always so much to do, and so little time and resources to address those needs we see. It's easy to feel like those disciples in front of that big, hungry crowd in Galilee. We almost wish those people and the challenges they posed would just go away.

-- But what does Jesus say? He tells his disciples to bring what they have to him. He takes that little bit, and through prayer he makes it

more than enough for all. Jesus literally works wonders with the puny talents and resources we are willing to turn over to Him.

-- It's easy to be overwhelmed with the problems of our world. We look at what is happening in Israel and the Gaza strip and wonder when that will end. (Talk about hungry people). We look at the frightened young people at our borders, running for their lives, and wonder what can be done for them without overwhelming our own country.

-- Of course, these are tough issues, and we won't solve them overnight. But Jesus simply asks us to look at what is in front of us: what are the needs we see? How can we respond, with Jesus' help?

-- This week, our parish is charged, not with feeding 5,000 men and their families, but about 100-125 people this Thursday evening at the community meal. We need people to help prepare (Wed. and Thurs.) and serve the meal. Perhaps that's a call you can respond to.

-- In 2005, tough decisions were made because of the changes in population of NW Ohio and the challenge of providing adequate priestly ministry for our parishes.

-- But our call to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and shelter the homeless remains strong. The hand of the Lord must continue to be present through the work of his disciples today.

-- We may, and often do, feel inadequate to meet those needs. Of course, we need to provide training for people meeting specific needs.

-- But, when all is said and done, we must turn to the Lord to ask him to transform the little we have into more than enough.

-- And, we do that when we come to this altar to be fed with his Body and Blood. The hand of the Lord feeds us here. And he gives us the strength to go out and feed others.