

Here is a container of Aveeno moisturizing lotion. The way it functions is to push down on the pump and out comes the lotion. Works fine. At some point, we will end up pumping and nothing will come out. We may shake the container and then pump and some more lotion may come out. Eventually, those efforts are exhausted. Now we think we've used up all of the lotion because nothing is coming despite our best efforts. With the particular color for the container, it is impossible to peek inside to observe if truly there is any more lotion. Cutting the container in 2 and removing the pump, using a spatula, one can remove up to 20% of the total lotion contained of the original. If tossed into the garbage can (which the company would delight in) we would not be getting our monies worth let alone benefitting from what lotion remained..

This is an example pointing to a theme in our 1<sup>st</sup> Reading and Gospel: the challenge to use what we have.....to use what is available. This is what God does. This is what Jesus does.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading Elisha tells a man to give 20 barley loaves and fresh grain to feed a 100 people. The man says: can't be done. Elisha insists. There ends up being leftovers.

In the Gospel, Jesus blesses what is available from a boy: 5 barley loaves and 2 fish to feed a large crowd. Once again, there are leftovers. Using what was available was sufficient.

The longer we inhabit our home on the earth, the wiser we are becoming to what it takes to live in harmony with creation around us. We are more sensitive to ecology concerns. Many of us re-cycle every chance we have. We use environmentally friendly products. We are learning to preserve and protect this gift of the earth which God has given us. We are being stewards of creation.

In these difficult economic times, we are finding ways to simplify. For example, if we are not wearing items of clothing we may choose to take them to St. Vincent de Paul or Goodwill. Someone else may wear what we no longer do.

My sisters and brothers, this week pay attention to what is available to us. These are gifts from God. Also, check and see if we have items in our homes, garages, and sheds that we no longer use. Regarding food, focus how often we creatively combine leftovers for our nourishment. Be mindful of what we may throw out for any reason. And may we remember to use completely whatever comes in a jar, toothpaste or lotion container, soup can or any other object. God and Jesus always use what is available in our lives. Let's see if we can do the same.