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## **A homily for the Wednesday of the 14th Week in Ordinary Time**

**Date:** Wednesday, July 9, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

**First Reading:** Genesis 41:55–57, 42:5–7a, 17–24a

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 33:2–3, 10–11, 18–19 | **Response:** Psalm 33:22

**Gospel Acclamation:** The Kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe in the Gospel

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 10:1–7

**Preached at:** the Chapel of Emmaus House in the Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe.

Today's readings invite us to reflect on how God works through people—flawed, wounded, sometimes unwilling people—to feed the hungry, heal the broken, and carry out His saving work.

We meet Joseph at a moment of deep emotion. His brothers have come to Egypt seeking food. They do not recognise him, but he recognises them. And when they bow before him, the old dream he once had as a boy—of his brothers' sheaves bowing to his—comes true. That dream, from years earlier, was not fantasy. It was foresight. God had been preparing this moment all along.

Joseph steps aside and weeps. Not from weakness, but from insight. He sees the long path God has taken—through betrayal, through prison, through suffering—to bring him to this moment of mercy. He says nothing yet, but in that silence, we can hear the struggle: Does he act from memory or from mission? Does he return what they gave him—violence for violence—or does he return what God has given him—mercy for mercy?

Joseph had been placed, without choosing it, in a position to save lives. Not only in Egypt, but for his own family, and for the future people of Israel. He had become, through suffering and trust, the steward of bread in a time of famine. He did not use that power to punish. He used it to preserve.

The psalm reminds us of this same trust. “Let your mercy be upon us, O Lord, even as we place our trust in you.” These are not words for a peaceful time. Psalm 33 is a song of hope in the midst of uncertainty—of trusting God’s plan when our own plans have failed. For many in Zimbabwe today, struggling with economic pressure, food insecurity, and faltering systems, this psalm is not a poetic line—it’s a lifeline.

And then, in the Gospel, Jesus gathers His twelve disciples and gives them a share in His own authority. Not just to teach or encourage, but to cast out unclean spirits and cure every disease and illness. It is a mission that is physical and spiritual. They are sent to proclaim the nearness of God and to embody it—with their hands, with their compassion, with their presence. He does not send them to foreign nations or safe cities. He sends them to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel”—to their own, to those who knew the promises but had forgotten the hope.

Just as Joseph became the bearer of bread in a time of hunger, these disciples are sent as bearers of healing in a time of despair. One feeds the body in a famine. The others feed the soul where faith has dried up. Both are signs that God has not abandoned His people.

And we too are part of this mission. Like Joseph, we may find ourselves in places we didn’t ask for—in roles we didn’t expect. But God can use our presence. He can work through what we have—our time, our witness, our quiet courage—to nourish those around us. And like the apostles, we have been given authority too—not worldly power, but the authority of love, of healing, of announcing in simple ways that the Kingdom of Heaven is near.

Today we also remember Saint Augustine Zhao Rong and his companions—men and women who bore witness to Christ at great cost. Among them are four French Jesuit priests: Léon-Ignace Mangin, Paul Denn, Rémy Isoré, and Modeste Andlauer, who were martyred in China during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. They died alongside many Chinese lay Christians—mothers, catechists, grandparents, and children—whose faith could not be silenced. When the Boxers attacked the mission at Wuyi, Mary Zhu Wu, a devoted member of the community, stood before Fr Mangin with her arms outstretched to shield him. She was shot and killed.

Augustine Zhao Rong himself had once been a soldier, assigned to guard a missionary. But the Gospel he encountered transformed him. He became a Christian, then a priest, and finally, a martyr. His story reminds us that the Word of God is not merely spoken—it is lived. It is not only something we preach. It is something we become.

So we ask today: Where is God asking us to become bearers of bread, of healing, of hope? Where is He asking us to be present—not with answers, but with mercy?

As we go into prayer, let us ponder:

- Where have I seen the providential hand of God in my own story—even through sorrow or suffering?
- Who in my life is hungry for hope, healing, or mercy—and how might I be sent to them?
- What grace do I need this week to live with faithfulness, courage, and quiet authority?

May our small acts become part of God's great plan. And may our lives be signs that the Kingdom is near. Amen.

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