Fr Matthew Charlesworth, SJ
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Memorial of St John Mary Vianney, priest

Date: Monday, August 4, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Numbers 11:4b–15
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 81:12–17 | **Response:** Psalm 81:2a
Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 4:4
Gospel Reading: Matthew 14:13–21
Preached at: the Chapel of Richartz House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

Dear brothers,

Today's readings invite us into the miracle of tired hands.

The people are tired. Moses is tired. Even Jesus is tired. And still—God feeds them.

In the wilderness, the Israelites grumble. Manna, once a marvel, now tastes dull. They long for Egypt's comforts, forgetting their chains. Moses, worn thin, cries out: "Why have you treated your servant so badly?" That's not a triumphant prophet. That's a man exhausted by love.

And yet, God responds—not with rebuke, but with relief: "I will take some of the spirit that is on you and put it on them." This is the quiet work of the Holy Spirit—the divine strength that moves through human weakness. The Spirit doesn't remove the weight, but builds capacity to carry it, and to share it.

And it's not just Moses. The burden is shared among others. The Holy Spirit, who binds us as one Body, draws out gifts in the community for the good of all. Tiredness itself becomes communal. In Zimbabwe, this is clear: nurses without gloves still show up. Teachers walk miles without chalk. Grandmothers feed children from empty cupboards. These are not solitary saints, but a suffering people holding one another up.

This is desolation, as St Ignatius names it—not mere sadness, but dryness, emptiness, the absence of felt consolation. And yet, Ignatius teaches: stay the course. Desolation is a crucible. It purifies love. It strips away comfort until we

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serve God for God alone. St John of the Cross calls this the “dark night”—where the roots grow deepest.

Then the Psalm: “O that my people would listen to me!” This is not wrath—it’s a cry of longing. God aches for His people to receive what He longs to give. “I would feed you with the finest of wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.” Sweetness from stone. Grace where there should be none.

In the Gospel, Jesus has just heard of John the Baptist’s death. Seeking solitude, he’s met by a crowd. Still, he welcomes. Still, he teaches. Still, he heals. Even in grief, he gives.

Then evening falls. The disciples—practical and tired—say, “Send them away.” But Jesus turns to them: “Give them something yourselves.”

There is a pause. Then: “We have only five loaves and two fish.”

Only.

But they offer it. And in his hands, it becomes enough. More than enough. Not enough—until it is given.

This is grace: God’s power made perfect in weakness. He does not ask for abundance, only trust. He takes what we have—not what we wish we had—and multiplies it.

And this moment leads us to the Eucharist. At every Mass, Christ says again, “Give them something.” Then gives us himself—his Body, his Blood. This is not a symbol. It is Christ, truly present. The food for the journey. The miracle for tired hands.

Lumen Gentium teaches that the faithful share in Christ’s priesthood—not just to receive, but to offer. We bring our smallness, our labour, our sorrow, and unite it to the sacrifice of Christ. And in doing so, even our fatigue becomes holy.

St John Vianney lived this mystery. He rose early, prayed long, and heard confessions until night. He once said, “God knows you’ll sin again—and still, He forgives you.” His strength was not his own. It was the Spirit’s. And through his tired hands, God nourished a whole village.

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And this is our vocation too. Not just to endure, but to love in the midst of exhaustion. In Zimbabwe, that miracle continues—not in spectacle, but in steady mercy. In classrooms, in clinics, in kitchens. Tired hands still feed multitudes.

Ignatian prayer invites us into the story.

Picture the Gospel scene. The sun is low. The crowd restless. You are tired. You have very little. Jesus turns to you and says, “Give them something.” What do you offer? What do you hold back?

Sit beside Moses beneath the stars. He is slumped. So are you. What do you say to God? What does He whisper back?

Or see Peter on the sea. He steps out at Jesus’ word, then sinks. “Lord, save me!” he cries. And Jesus reaches out—at once. Even faltering faith becomes rescue.

This is the miracle of tired hands. God does not ask for perfection, only presence. Our hands may be empty. His are not. And in His hands, our little becomes abundance.

So let us go forward—tired, yes, but together. Strengthened by the Spirit. Fed by the Eucharist. Carried by each other.

This week, I invite you to pray with these questions:

- Where in my life do I feel tired like Moses? And how might I speak honestly with God about it?
- What little am I still holding back from placing in Christ’s hands?
- How might I join my tired hands with others’, becoming a visible sign of mercy in Zimbabwe’s weariness?

Amen.

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.

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