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Tuesday after Epiphany

Date: Tuesday, January 6, 2026 | **Season:** Christmas | **Year:** A
First Reading: 1 John 4:7–10
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 72:1–2, 3–4, 7–8 | **Response:** Psalm 72:11
Gospel Acclamation: Luke 4:18
Gospel Reading: Mark 6:34–44
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today's Word can be gathered into one simple sentence: God's love is revealed when it feeds people who cannot feed themselves.

Our first reading, from the First Letter of John, is plain and demanding. Love comes from God. We did not begin it. We did not earn it. God loved us first, and that love took flesh when He sent His Son into the world. John is writing to a small, fragile community, people who feel the pressure of daily life and the temptation to turn inward. He does not give them a theory to admire but a pattern to live. If God's love has reached us, it must flow through us. Otherwise it dries up. As Saint Augustine once preached on these very verses, love is God speaking, and if it truly speaks in us, it will always move us toward the one in need. Epiphany is not about knowing more. It is about God being seen in what we do.

That love has always been measured by how it treats the vulnerable, which is why Psalm 72 is placed on our lips today. Give the king your justice, O God. This is not polite prayer. It is a bold demand. Power is judged not by strength or success, but by whether it defends the poor and gives dignity to those who struggle to survive. Peace, the psalm insists, is not a feeling. It is the fruit of justice lived out. In Zimbabwe today, where many families live from one day to the next, where young people wonder whether their studies will ever open doors, this psalm still challenges us. It is a question addressed to our leaders, our institutions, and our own hearts. What kind of world are we quietly helping to shape?

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The Gospel from Mark gathers all of this into one living scene. Jesus steps ashore and sees a large crowd. He is moved with compassion because they are like sheep without a shepherd. Those words echo the story of Moses, the shepherd called from the wilderness to lead a lost people to freedom. Long ago, God promised through Moses that a prophet like him would come. Now Jesus stands in that place. He teaches the people at length, and then He feeds them.

Many of us have seen this moment portrayed in *The Chosen*. Watching it can help us notice what Mark wants us to see. The setting is a deserted place. Evening is coming. The food is clearly not enough. Mark shows Jesus not overriding limits, but blessing them. Five loaves become a feast through shared trust. The disciples want to send the crowd away. Jesus answers with a sentence that still unsettles the Church: ***you*** *give them something to eat*.

This scene carries the memory of the manna in the desert, bread given day by day, bread that could not be stored or controlled, bread that taught trust. Yet Jesus goes further. He does not rain food from heaven. He takes what is already there, blesses it, breaks it, and hands it back. The miracle passes through human hands. In Ignatian prayer, we are invited to step into that moment. Feel the tiredness of the day. Hear the hunger in the crowd. Notice the hesitation of the disciples as they distribute food that should not be enough. Where do we place ourselves? Counting what is missing, or offering what we have?

This broken bread foreshadows our Eucharist, the new manna that sustains us and sends us out. We are fed not so that we feel full and safe, but so that we become a people who multiply compassion. The Eucharist shapes us into those who do not say, someone else will handle it. In our own context, that might mean sharing meals, supporting students and families under strain, choosing not to waste, noticing who is being left out, and acting before indifference settles in.

At the end of the Gospel, twelve baskets remain. God’s generosity is not fragile. When love is shared, there is more than expected, though we often only see it afterwards. The fragments are gathered so that nothing is lost. Not bread. Not people.

This is the epiphany given to us today. Jesus is the shepherd like Moses, but greater. He does not only lead people out of danger. He forms a community that learns, slowly and imperfectly, how to feed one another.

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As we carry this Word into the rest of the day, three questions for prayer.

- Where today have I received God’s love before I deserved it, and how can I pass that on in one concrete way?
- When I notice need around me, do I send it away, or do I place what I have into Christ’s hands?
- And tonight, in the quiet of the Examen, where was I invited to help gather the fragments, so that no one would be forgotten?

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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.