

Rev. Emmanuel-Garet Ifeakor
Isaiah 55:1-3
Romans 8:35, 37-39
Matthew 14:13-21

18TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
Epiphany Catholic Church
Louisville, KY, USA
August 2, 2026

Theme: “Bring them here to me.”

Bring them here to me. (Singing) “He is able. He is able. He is able, just now; just now, he is able. He is able, just now.” Bring them here to me. My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I would like to invite you to reflect with me on “Bring them here to me.” This clause was said by Jesus to the disciples in the gospel reading today. Now, before you understand this statement, we are going to see what happened before that. The crowds were in a deserted place with Jesus. When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, “This is a deserted place, and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.” They wanted the crowds to be dismissed by Jesus so that they could go out and get something to eat. Jesus said to them, “There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves.” The reply of Jesus implies there is no need to send them away. But they said to him, “Five loaves and two fish are all we have here.” Mark the phrase, “all we have here.” Another translation - New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition - of this verse says, “They replied, ‘We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.’” Keep in mind the word “nothing” in this reply. Yet another says, “But we have only five loaves and two fish.” I also want you to underline “only” in that reply. Now, another translation says, “five loaves and two fish are all we have here.”

It was at this juncture that Jesus said, “Bring them here to me.” Now, considering all these responses: “we have nothing here but...,” “All we have here...,” “But we have only...” express doubt. In fact, they have considered all they had as nothing to be compared to the crowds. For them, it is undesirous when compared to the targeted audience or the desired result. They have considered all they had as “only.” They have considered them as “all we had.” So, for them, what they had was insufficient. What they had was insignificant. What they had was so little when considered to the crowds in the desert. What they had was inadequate. What they had, according to them, was considered as “nothing.” This indicates the limited resources available. The answer also reflects a human perspective and insufficiency. Recall that they (disciples) initiated this dialogue. They said, “This is

a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.” They initiated this act of sending them away and getting something to eat, because they have considered all they had as nothing to be compared to the magnitude of the crowd. However, Jesus told them to bring them to him. He said the blessing and this resulted in the great miracle of feeding over 5,000 people. In the gospel according to John, where this miracle was also reported, Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?” The intervention of Andrew brings out clearly the doubt and concern of these disciples. But Jesus insisted, “Bring them here to me.” Jesus acted on these in order to feed the crowds. Then what they considered insufficient became surplus and excess. So, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I also recall the case of Gideon. Gideon was one of the judges in Israel during the days of the judges. God told Gideon to get ready to deliver the Israelites. However, Gideon having considered himself and his background, “Responded, ‘But sir, how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family,’” Cf. Judges 6:14-15. Then, why do you want me to go and serve the people? With this, Gideon expressed his doubt and concern. However, God promised to be with him. And he accomplished what he was sent to do.

Now, what do we want to establish? We have established the fact that Christ is looking for what to act upon; that thing you have considered insufficient and insignificant. These are what you have considered as “small, little, nothing, and only” in your life. Jesus insisted that the disciples should bring what they have, no matter their doubts and concerns. When they brought them, Jesus acted on them. And this resulted in divine multiplication: *“They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over twelve wicker baskets full.”* With this, Jesus demonstrates His divine provision and foreshadows the spiritual nourishment he offers. Thus, when Jesus tells you to bring them here, that is, to bring what you have, you are going to receive divine multiplication without charge. Isaiah tells us in the first reading; come to me all who are hungry and thirsty; *Thus says the LORD: All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat; Come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk!* Come to me and eat and buy bread without charge or money. When Jesus insists that you bring them to him, he doesn't charge you. He doesn't take money from you. Other people may, but He does not. He wants you to come. And I want to admonish you to let nothing prevent you from bringing it/them to Jesus. The second reading tells us that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Paul puts this as a question, “Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?” I add, will anxiety or frustration or depression?

Therefore, what are you going to bring to Jesus, because Jesus is looking for something to act upon; that thing you have considered insignificant. Your present condition which you have considered and tagged unsolvable. Your despair which makes you withdraw from attending Mass or going to Church. On your part, you have considered it insignificant. It is exactly these conditions that Jesus is telling you to bring them to him. That which you consider little, Jesus is asking you to bring it to him for divine multiplication. Is it your present financial instability, or you just have only a few dollars? Bring that condition to Jesus. At times, when you sit down and consider your problems and challenges, you will be weighed down and be despaired from coming to Jesus. Recall, Jesus is able. He wants something to act upon and to multiply. He wants something to act upon, that thing you consider insignificant. That thing you consider insufficient. He will multiply them beyond your expectation. Ephesians 3:20 says, God is able to do more than we can ask, think or imagine. The responsorial says, “The hand of the Lord feeds us; he answers all our needs.”

My dear friends in Christ, at times what draws you back or prevents us from bringing those to Jesus are the things mentioned in the second reading. You think you have no hope again. That little hope that is left, bring it to Jesus. It is the time for Jesus to step in. But you have to bring it/them to Jesus because he is able to multiply them beyond expectation. (Singing) “He is able. He is able. He is able just now. Just now, He is able. He is able just now.” Bring them to Jesus.