

January 8, 2008
Tuesday after the Epiphany

Readings of the day may be found on the following link:

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab>

1 John 4:7-10

Psalm 72:1-2, 3-4, 7-8

Matthew 6:34-44

Beloved let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.

Dismiss them so that they can go to the surrounding farms and villages and buy themselves something to eat."□

He said to them in reply, give them some food yourselves."

There is no way that we can escape the meaning of today's readings. John puts it very succinctly: "let us love one another." He knows the meaning of the story of the loaves and the fish. I write this as the uprising in Kenya is happening. I have a friend who is closely connected to the people there due to the nature of her work. I have heard stories about the seeds of success that the program she directs has planted. Our state medical school has been building and running medical clinics to help with the HIV epidemic. And, now what will happen? Is all lost? Today's newspaper printed a letter sent by a medical doctor who has been working in Kenya with the IU group for many years. He said, "We have seen some things over the last few days that cannot be described in this note. We have witnessed sad evidence that we as a human family have a lot of growing yet to do." Hope is the only answer we have to this sort of thing. It is the only answer we have to the disruption in our families and in our relationships and even in our own hearts. In light of all I know and believe, I am still tempted to ask God to take care of the problems in the world. I turn to prayer as if it is magic and overlook my call to continue the work of healing and reconciliation. For me, today's gospel keeps hope alive for it reminds me that I cannot simply turn the problem over to God; it reminds me that God has asked me to take care of my brothers and sisters. Jesus is saying to me exactly what he said to the disciples, "Give them some food yourselves; take care of their needs" John tells us the answer is to love one another. But we are left to translate that into action. We are called to respond. We are called to recognize that life is about relationship. Relationship is the only place where love can exist. We are not separate. It is not about giving generously because all has been given for the common good. In his book on *Why be Catholic?* Richard Rohr says, " ...the Spirit is given "for the sake of the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7). We cannot make any claim to being people of the Spirit if we do not have that profound commitment to the common good first." Today, as I reflect on the violence in the world and the suffering of so many, I am reminded that I have some work to do to ease the pain of suffering and bring about the hope of Peace.

Pray as if everything depended on God; work as if everything depended on you.

St Augustine/Cardinal Francis J. Spellman