

Today, we are baptizing Margaux Anna Engram –

a precocious, mischievous, little wisp of a thing.

Yesterday morning, as we rehearsed for her Baptism . . .

as Margaux darted behind her mom to hide from me,

as she skipped around the Nave climbed over and hid under the pews,

as she moved, with growing comfort and excitement, around the altar

and peered suspiciously into the baptismal font,

this precocious, mischievous, little wisp of a thing

invited me to see the miracle at the heart of this morning's Gospel

through the lens of my baptismal hopes for her.



Here, in Matthew's Gospel,

Jesus retires to a deserted place seeking solitude

after the death of John the Baptist.

But the crowds follow him on foot.

When he looks at the thousands gathered on that dry hillside,

he doesn't see a nuisance or a disruption to his private grief.

He sees deep, aching need.

He has compassion for them, heals their sick,

and as the light begins to fade, his disciples grow anxious.

"This is a deserted place," the disciples tell him, "and the hour is now late.

Send the crowds away into the villages to buy food for themselves."



This is the standard human response in a world obsessed with scarcity:

There is not enough. Send them away.

We look at the scale of the world's hunger,

the exhaustion of our resources, and our own finite energy,

and our natural impulse is to manage expectations.

To turn people away to fend for themselves.

But Jesus gives a command that flips the disciples' logic entirely:

"They need not go away; *you* give them something to eat."

"We have nothing here," they answer, "but five loaves and two fish."

† † †

Notice how quickly we dismiss what is right in front of us

because it seems too small to matter.

Five loaves and two fish among thousands *is*,

by any reasonable calculation, *a joke*.

It is a mere wisp of a meal.

But Jesus doesn't ask for abundance; Jesus asks for what is available.

Jesus takes those meager offerings, looks up to heaven, blesses them,

breaks them and gives them back to the disciples to distribute.

And everyone ate. Everyone was satisfied.

And they gathered twelve baskets of leftovers.

The miracle was not just that hunger was appeased,

but that the boundaries of scarcity

were shattered by the lavishness of divine grace.

† † †

Which brings me back to little Margaux.

When we look at a child standing

before the massive mystery of God's grace,

or when we look at our own fragile lives in a daunting world,

it is easy to feel like those five small loaves.

How can one small life make a dent in the world's loneliness, grief, or hunger?

My baptismal hope for Margaux –

and for all of us gathered around this font today –

is that she will never fall for the lie of scarcity.

I hope she learns that God does not wait for us

to be big, powerful, or completely self-sufficient before using us.

God takes the little wisps of who we are –

our playful curiosity, our small acts of kindness, our modest gifts,

even our mischievous spirits – and blesses them.

† † †

When Margaux is baptized today, she is brought into a community

defined not by "sending people away," but by welcoming them in;

not by hoarding what we have, but by breaking and sharing it.

In the waters of baptism, God says to Margaux as I now say to each of you:

You are enough. What you bring is enough.

† † †

Beloved, I hope that we, like Margaux,

dart joyfully into the spaces of God's house,

look with curious wonder into the mysteries of faith,

and hand over our tiny loaves and fishes,
trusting that in the hands of Christ,
they will always be more than enough to feed a hungry world.
And I hope that as we gather around this Table for Communion,
we may well feel the thrill of the words of Blessed Augustine:
“be what you see; receive what you are.”¹
Because we begin to discern that as we receive, we are also offering ourselves.
Broken pieces . . . lumps of clay that the Potter
continues to mold into a community
where everyone is seen, love abounds,
and there is enough grace for everyone.
Amen.

¹ Augustine, Sermon 272 (“On the Eucharist”), PL38:1247, accessed August 1, 2026, Early Church Texts.