



Tuesday of the 1st Week of Lent



Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 | **Season:** Lent | **Year:** C

First Reading: Isaiah 55:10–11

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 34:4–7, 16–19 | **Response:** Psalm 34:18b

Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 4:4b

Gospel Reading: Matthew 6:7–15

Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia.

Lent is a season of invitation. An invitation to slow down, to listen more closely, to recognize the quiet but persistent voice of God calling us to renewal. It is not a time for grand gestures or hollow sacrifices, but for real, lasting transformation—transformation that starts in the hidden places of the heart.

The Prophet Isaiah speaks to us today of something small, something almost imperceptible—the rain and the snow that fall from the heavens, soaking into the earth, nourishing it, making it bear fruit. God's word, Isaiah tells us, works in much the same way. It does not return empty. It seeps into our lives, sometimes quietly, sometimes unnoticed, yet always with purpose. But here's the challenge: soil must be ready to receive the rain. Hardened ground resists it. And so, we must ask ourselves—how open is my heart? How willing am I to let God's word soak into my life, not just as something I hear, but something that changes me?

The psalmist assures us: “From all their distress, God rescues the just.” There is something profoundly hopeful in that. We are not left alone to struggle, to wrestle with our weaknesses, to fight for justice in a world that so often resists it. God hears. God sees. God acts. But—perhaps more unsettling—He calls us to do the same.

And then we come to today's Gospel. Jesus, in the simplest of teachings, pulls us back to what really matters: prayer, real prayer. Not empty words, not performances, not rituals devoid of meaning. Just a child speaking to their Father. The *Our Father* is so familiar, we barely notice the radical nature of what we are say-

ing when we pray it. We ask for bread, but not just for ourselves—give us this day our daily bread. We ask for forgiveness, but only as much as we are willing to forgive. And we ask to be led, because left to ourselves, we so often stumble.

There is an honesty here that is deeply Ignatian. Saint Ignatius teaches us that prayer must begin with a deep awareness of where we actually are—our real desires, our real struggles, our real need for grace. It is not about pretending. It is about presenting ourselves to God as we really are, and allowing Him to shape us.

Think of Saint Frances of Rome, whose feast is normally remembered a couple of days ago. She did not set out to be extraordinary. She was a wife, a mother, a woman who suffered loss and hardship. But through it all, she never stopped listening for God's voice in the ordinary moments of her life. She found Him in her home, in her family, in the poor. She let His word soak into the soil of her life, and it bore fruit.

And here we are—listening, praying, searching. Zambia, like so many places, has its share of struggles. Economic hardship. Inequality. People who go without their daily bread. And it would be easy to despair, easy to say that nothing we do can change things. But that is not the Lenten call. The call is to trust that small things matter. That prayer matters. That one act of forgiveness, one act of generosity, one moment of saying yes to God—these things do not return empty. They bear fruit.

So, as we go forward, and while we keep Pope Francis in our prayers, let's take a moment to ask ourselves:

- Where in my life is God's word trying to take root? Am I open to it, or am I resisting?
- How can my prayer become more real, more honest, more about God and less about myself?
- What small, unnoticed act of love can I do this week that will bear fruit, even if I never see the harvest?

Lent is not about looking holy. It is about becoming holy. And holiness, more often than not, looks like small, hidden acts of love.

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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.