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Wednesday of the 3rd Week of Lent

Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2025 | **Season:** Lent | **Year:** C
First Reading: Deuteronomy 4:1, 5–9
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 147:12–13, 15–16, 19–20 | **Response:** Psalm 147:12a
Gospel Acclamation: John 6:63c, 68c
Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:17–19
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

Throughout our Lenten journey, we encounter the challenge of living out God's commandments, a challenge that remains as pertinent today as it was when the Israelites were preparing to enter the Promised Land. The readings for today offer a powerful reminder of the importance of fidelity to God's law, not merely as a set of rules, but as a loving response to God's love for us, and as a pathway to wisdom, justice, and a deeper relationship with God and neighbour.

Moses, in the Book of Deuteronomy, addresses the Israelites as they stand on the threshold of their new life in the Promised Land. He does not simply remind them of the laws they must follow; he shows them how these laws are an expression of God's loving wisdom and a means for them to reflect God's justice to the world. "For thus will you give evidence of your wisdom and intelligence to the nations" (Dt 4:6). This is not a wisdom of the world, marked by power, self-interest, or dominion over others. This is the wisdom of a people called to be a light to the nations, a people who live in covenant with God and manifest that covenant in their way of life. Through fidelity to these laws, the Israelites would show the world what it means to live in harmony with God's creation, to live justly, and to care for one another, especially the most vulnerable among them. In this way, the law becomes a vehicle for love, justice, and peace, a way of drawing nearer to the heart of God.

The Psalm reinforces this call to justice, speaking of the greatness of the Lord who "builds up Jerusalem" and "gathers the outcasts of Israel" (Ps 147:2). It is God's desire to restore and heal, to offer a place to the broken and the lost. In these words, we hear the echo of God's own heart for the marginalized and op-

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pressed, a theme that resonates deeply in our contemporary world. Our Lenten journey calls us to open our hearts in a similar way—to restore, to heal, and to seek justice, particularly for those who are most vulnerable.

In the Gospel, Jesus affirms the enduring value of the law, but he deepens its meaning. “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets,” he says, “I have come not to abolish but to fulfill” (Mt 5:17). This fulfillment is not a simple legalism, but a transformation of the law into a living force that calls us to the very heart of God’s will. Jesus shows us that the law is not just about external observance but about the interior conversion of the heart. “Whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the Kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:19). The measure of greatness in God’s kingdom is not the adherence to a set of rules, but the practice of love, mercy, and justice in every action.

Jesus’ teaching is not just about following the letter of the law but about embodying the spirit of the law—love of God and love of neighbour. This transformation of the law into a means of love and justice lies at the heart of Catholic Social Teaching. Justice, as the dignity of the human person, calls us to be attentive to the needs of the poor and the marginalized. It urges us to see Christ in those who suffer, those who are outcast, those who are oppressed. In the context of Zambia, where poverty and inequality persist, the challenge to live out the commandments with justice and mercy is not merely theoretical; it is practical and urgent. How do we, as a community, reflect God’s justice? How do we bring hope to those who suffer from poverty and marginalization? How do we, as followers of Christ, embody the wisdom and intelligence of God’s law in our actions, bringing healing and restoration to the broken parts of our society?

Saints like St. Joseph, the patron saint of the Universal Church who we celebrated last week, offer a powerful example of obedience to God’s will, not in words alone, but in action. St. Joseph’s quiet, steadfast commitment to God’s plan, even when it seemed mysterious or challenging, calls us to reflect on our own response to God’s calling. His example teaches us that justice and wisdom are often worked out in the small, hidden moments of life, where we are called to be faithful even when no one else sees.

As we continue our journey through Lent, let us ask ourselves how we can embody the wisdom of God’s commandments in our lives. Are we following Christ’s example by transforming the law into a means of justice, mercy, and

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love? Are we living in such a way that our lives give evidence to the nations of God's goodness and care for the poor, the marginalized, and the outcast?

In the weeks ahead, as we approach the climax of our Lenten journey, let us ask ourselves:

- How am I being called to live out God's justice in my daily life, particularly in relation to those who are marginalized in our society?
- In what areas of my life do I need to experience a deeper conversion, moving from merely external observance of the law to a true transformation of the heart?
- How can I better embody the spirit of St. Joseph, whose quiet obedience to God's will inspires us to live out justice and mercy in our own lives?

These questions challenge us to a deeper engagement with God's law, urging us to let the commandments shape not just our actions, but our hearts, drawing us ever closer to God and to the dignity of every person we encounter. Let us journey through this Lent with a renewed commitment to the law of love, allowing it to transform our lives and our world.

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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.