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Monday of the 4th Week of Lent

Date: Monday, March 31, 2025 | **Season:** Lent | **Year:** C
First Reading: Isaiah 65:17–21
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 30:2, 4–6, 11–12a, 13b | **Response:** Psalm 30:2a
Gospel Acclamation: Amos 5:14
Gospel Reading: John 4:43–54
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

There are moments in life when hope seems like a distant dream, when the weight of suffering and disappointment presses so heavily upon us that we struggle to believe in renewal. We look at the world and see conflict. We look at our communities and see division. We look within ourselves and find wounds that have not yet healed. And yet, today's readings call us to something audacious: to believe in new creation, to trust in restoration, to walk by faith and not by sight.

The prophet Isaiah speaks to a people who have known exile, destruction, and despair. Their city had been torn down, their temple desecrated, their very identity as a chosen people thrown into question. And yet, into this devastation, God declares: "See, I am creating new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered." This is not merely a rebuilding project; it is a re-creation, a transformation so radical that even the memory of suffering will fade in the overwhelming light of God's renewal. The passage paints a picture of a world where no child dies too soon, where the elderly live in dignity, where work is fruitful and peace endures. It is the world as God intends it—a world of life, not loss; of joy, not mourning.

But this vision is not yet fully realized. We still live in a world where children suffer, where lives are cut short, where wars, injustice and sorrow persist. And so, the psalmist teaches us how to live in the tension between promise and present reality: with trust. "O Lord, you brought me up from the netherworld, you preserved me from those going down into the pit." The psalm speaks of a God who does not abandon his people, a God who turns mourning into dancing,

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a God who clothes us not in sackcloth but in joy. The psalmist does not deny suffering, but he proclaims that suffering does not have the final word. God is still at work.

And then we turn to the Gospel—a story of desperate hope. A royal official, a man of power and influence, comes to Jesus with the most human of requests: "Sir, come down before my child dies." He is a father who has exhausted all other options. He has resources, status, authority—but none of it can save his son. Only Jesus can. And Jesus, instead of traveling to the child's bedside, simply says, "You may go; your son will live."

Here is the moment of decision. The official came to Jesus seeking a miracle he could see, but he is instead given a word he must trust. "The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and departed." He does not argue. He does not beg for more assurance. He simply believes. And on the journey home, his faith is confirmed: his servants meet him with the news that his son was healed at the very hour Jesus had spoken.

This is the essence of faith. It is not merely believing that God exists, but entrusting ourselves to his word, walking forward even when we cannot yet see the fulfillment of the promise. How often do we demand visible signs before we trust God? How often do we hesitate, waiting for proof before we step out in faith? But Jesus calls us, as he called the official, to believe first, to trust first, and to walk forward knowing that God is faithful.

This theme of faith in the unseen, of trusting in God's work even before it is fully visible, is echoed in the life of Blessed Jan Beyzym, SJ. A Jesuit missionary to Madagascar, he left behind comfort and prestige in Poland to serve lepers—people abandoned by society, left to suffer alone. He worked tirelessly, not seeing immediate results, but believing that the love of Christ could restore dignity even in the most hopeless places. Against all odds, he built a hospital, cared for the sick, and bore witness to a love that does not require visible rewards to remain steadfast. Like the royal official, he trusted in the word of Jesus before seeing the fruits of his labor.

This is our calling, too. To trust that God is at work, even when we do not yet see the new heavens and the new earth. To believe in the power of Christ's word, even before we see its fulfillment. To walk forward in faith, knowing that heal-

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ing, renewal, and restoration are already unfolding.

So as we continue this Lenten journey, let us ask ourselves:

- Where is God calling me to trust his word, even when I do not yet see the outcome?
- How can I bear witness to hope in a world that is still waiting for healing?
- In what ways can I participate in God's work of new creation, bringing life where there is suffering and faith where there is doubt?

Let us walk forward, like the official in the Gospel, with hearts that trust and feet that follow, knowing that when Christ speaks, his word gives life.

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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.