



Thursday of the 4th Week of Lent



Date: Thursday, April 3, 2025 | **Season:** Lent | **Year:** C

First Reading: Exodus 32:7–14

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 106:19–23 | **Response:** Psalm 106:4a

Gospel Acclamation: John 3:16

Gospel Reading: John 5:31–47

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

The story in today's First Reading is one of great human drama and divine mercy. The people of Israel, only recently freed from slavery, now stand guilty before God, worshipping a golden calf in a moment of foolishness and impatience. As they abandon the covenant, the Lord's anger burns against them. It is here that Moses, the great intercessor, steps in. In his role as mediator, he pleads with God to spare the people, reminding God of His promises, His mercy, and His love for the children of Israel. "Leave your burning wrath; relent and do not bring this disaster on your people." Moses' plea is not just for Israel's physical survival, but for the very life of the covenant itself. He argues with God, showing a depth of faith that seeks not just the survival of the people but their reconciliation with God.

We can imagine the tension, the sense of risk hanging in the balance. Would God relent? Would He spare them? In the face of such an offense, Moses' intervention calls forth a powerful example of advocacy and intercession, which echoes through Scripture and into our own lives today. This moment is not just about Moses pleading for mercy—it is a reminder of God's patience and His capacity for forgiveness. It is a call for us to be bold in our own intercessory prayer, to stand in the breach on behalf of others, seeking God's mercy.

The psalmist recalls this powerful scene, bringing us back to that moment of divine anger and the subsequent mercy: "For this he said he would destroy them, but Moses, the man he had chosen, stood in the breach before him, to turn back his anger from destruction." Moses stands as an advocate, showing us the path of intercession: to pray, not with resignation, but with courage. His boldness in the

face of judgment speaks to the faith we are called to embody—faith that believes in God’s ability to heal, restore, and renew, even in the most difficult circumstances. Moses’ action shows that we, too, can stand before God, not only for ourselves but for those in need of mercy, for the poor, the marginalized, and those who have gone astray.

In the Gospel, we find ourselves in a similar courtroom drama. Jesus, the true intercessor, finds himself accused by the very ones who should have known Him best. The Pharisees, in their zeal for the law, see Jesus as a threat—breaking the Sabbath, performing healings, and challenging their understanding of God’s law. Jesus defends His actions, turning the tables on those who seek to accuse Him, revealing that their very hope, Moses, will ultimately be their accuser. As Moses had interceded for Israel, so now Moses’ testimony, along with the testimonies of John the Baptist, the works of Jesus, the Father, and the Scriptures themselves, all bear witness to the truth of who Jesus is. He is not breaking the law but fulfilling it. The law points to Him; He is the one whom the Scriptures spoke of, the one who brings life to all who believe.

But what does this mean for us today? The Gospel presents a challenge. Jesus does not simply ask us to believe in Him as the one who brings eternal life—He asks us to bear witness to Him. The Gospel’s call to bear witness is a call to live in such a way that others might come to know the truth of who Jesus is. Are we, like Moses, willing to stand in the breach for others? Are we willing to take up the cause of justice, of mercy, and of intercession, especially for those who are suffering or lost? This call to witness is not merely about professing our faith, but about embodying it through our actions—caring for the poor, the marginalized, and the outcasts in our society, speaking out when we see injustice, and advocating for the dignity of every human person.

As we journey through Lent, we are reminded that it is not enough to simply believe in Christ. Lent calls us to a deeper transformation—a transformation that calls us to greater action, greater mercy, greater service. The great Jesuit saints, from St. Ignatius of Loyola onwards, remind us that our faith is not passive but active. Ignatius himself, in his Spiritual Exercises, calls us to find God in all things, to serve Him with our whole lives. His example of personal transformation, grounded in deep prayer and a commitment to justice and service, is a powerful testimony to what it means to live out the Gospel today.

In the spirit of Lent, we are invited to ask: How can we bear witness to Jesus in our world today? How can we, like Moses and like Jesus, stand in the breach for those in need of mercy, for those whose voices are not heard, for those who are oppressed or forgotten? How can we advocate for the dignity of every person, especially the poor and marginalized, in our own communities and beyond?

This Lent, let us challenge ourselves to be bold in our intercessory prayer, to boldly stand in the breach for others, and to live lives that witness to the mercy and justice of Christ. The time is now for action. The hour is coming when we will all stand before the Father, and our witness will either be for or against us. Let us, then, be witnesses of mercy, justice, and love, living out the Gospel in our lives today.

Let us reflect on these questions today:

- How can I be an intercessor for others, standing in the breach for those in need of mercy?
- What actions can I take today to be a witness to the justice and mercy of Jesus, particularly for the marginalized in my community?
- In what ways can I embody my faith more fully, integrating it into my daily life and relationships?

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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.

