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Friday of the 4th Week of Lent

Date: Friday, April 4, 2025 | **Season:** Lent | **Year:** C
First Reading: Wisdom of Solomon 2:1a, 12–22
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 34:17–21, 23 | **Response:** Psalm 34:19a
Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 4:4b
Gospel Reading: John 7:1–2, 10, 25–30
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

As we continue our journey through Lent, the readings of this day invite us into the heart of the confrontation between light and darkness, between truth and falsehood, between those who hear the voice of God and those who refuse to listen. The readings speak to us of divine justice, suffering for righteousness' sake, and the importance of recognizing the divine origins of the one sent to save us. They are a challenge to examine not only the world around us but also the state of our own hearts. How are we responding to the call of God in our lives? Are we truly open to seeing Christ for who He is, or are we allowing the confusion of the world to cloud our vision?

In the Book of Wisdom, we encounter the voice of the righteous sufferer, one who stands firm in his faith and is mocked, oppressed, and even threatened by the wicked. The anonymous "just one" of this passage is a prefiguration of Jesus, the righteous servant of God who would suffer at the hands of those who rejected Him. This servant's unwavering confidence in God provokes ridicule: "Let us see if his words are true; let us test what will happen at the end of his life" (Wisdom 2:17). These words echo the mockery Jesus would endure on the cross. Like the wicked who oppose the just one in the Wisdom passage, many in Jesus' time, and even today, fail to recognize that the path of the righteous often involves suffering. Yet, as the psalmist reminds us, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves" (Psalm 34:18). This gives us hope that, no matter how hard the journey or how deep the struggle, God is with us in our suffering, offering us deliverance and salvation.

This theme of opposition to the righteous is mirrored in the Gospel of John, where Jesus once again faces the disbelief and confusion of the crowds. The people are divided over who He truly is, with some beginning to wonder if He might

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indeed be the Messiah, while others, knowing where He is from, dismiss the possibility. Jesus, however, challenges their assumptions. He declares that they do not know where He truly comes from, and that only those who are "from God" can truly recognize the divine nature of His mission. In this moment, Jesus invites us to examine the deeper truth of His identity. He is not just a man from Nazareth; He is the one sent by the Father, the living Word of God among us.

The Gospel reminds us that true faith sees beyond the surface. The crowds could not recognize the divine origin of Jesus because they were looking for the wrong signs. Their understanding of the Messiah was confined to worldly expectations. Jesus, however, reveals that His mission transcends those expectations. His identity and His works are bound to the will of the Father, and only those who open their hearts to God's truth can recognize Him for who He truly is. This is a timeless call for us today. How often do we limit God's action in our lives to our own preconceptions and desires? How often do we fail to see Christ for who He truly is, because we are too caught up in worldly distractions or narrow understandings of what God is calling us to?

The readings also speak to us on a broader level about justice, suffering, and the challenge of standing firm in faith. In a world where corruption, inequality, and oppression still hold sway, we are called to stand as witnesses to the truth. Just as the righteous one in Wisdom suffers at the hands of the wicked, we too are invited to stand up for justice, particularly for the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed. In Zambia, as in many parts of the world, the struggle for justice remains as urgent as ever. Our Christian mission today compels us to work towards a society that upholds the dignity of every person and seeks the common good, especially for the most vulnerable among us. This is the challenge that Lent sets before us: to align ourselves more fully with the divine will, to recognize Christ not only in the Scriptures but also in the suffering and injustice we encounter in the world around us.

In this context, we are helped by the witness of St. Isidore of Seville, bishop and doctor of the Church, whose feast we celebrate today. A man of immense learning and deep faith, St. Isidore understood that true knowledge leads us not to pride, but to a deeper humility before the mystery of God. He labored to preserve and share the wisdom of the ages, yet he never lost sight of the wisdom of the Cross. In an age of confusion and fragmentation, he sought to unite faith and reason, offering the Church a vision of education rooted in charity and truth. His

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example reminds us that standing for the truth—especially in a world that prefers convenient lies—requires both courage and clarity. Like Jesus, St. Isidore faced misunderstanding and resistance, yet he remained steadfast in proclaiming Christ as the source of all wisdom. Today, when the voices of division and cynicism are loud, his legacy invites us to be people of integrity, forming our minds and hearts in the truth of the Gospel so that we might recognize and follow the One who is Truth incarnate.

The readings today invite us into a deeper understanding of what it means to follow Jesus. They call us to embrace the path of righteousness, even when it leads through suffering and misunderstanding. They challenge us to see Christ as He truly is, to recognize His divine origin and His call to us, and to live lives of justice and compassion, especially for the poor and marginalized. As we continue our Lenten journey, let us ask ourselves: Are we open to seeing Christ for who He truly is, or are we still bound by our own expectations? Are we ready to stand firm in the face of opposition, as the righteous sufferer in Wisdom did, knowing that God is with us in our suffering? How can we better serve those on the margins of society, and live out the justice, truth, and compassion of Christ in our world today?

As we reflect on these questions, let us ask ourselves:

- How open am I to recognizing Christ in the world around me, especially in the suffering and struggles of others?
- In what areas of my life am I being called to stand firm for justice, even in the face of opposition or discomfort?
- How can I better serve the marginalized and the poor, living out the compassion and love of Christ in my daily actions?

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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.

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