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Saturday of the 4th Week of Lent

Date: Saturday, April 5, 2025 | **Season:** Lent | **Year:** C
First Reading: Jeremiah 11:18–20
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 7:2–3, 9b–12 | **Response:** Psalm 7:2a
Gospel Acclamation: Luke 8:15
Gospel Reading: John 7:40–53
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

In today's readings, we meet two men who tell the truth and suffer for it.

The first is the prophet Jeremiah, who gives us a window into the heart of someone called to speak for God in a time when truth is dangerous. "I was like a trusting lamb led to slaughter," he says (Jer 11:19). That's not poetry. That's pain. That's the cost of prophecy. He's not complaining; he's revealing the burden of speaking a message that the powerful don't want to hear—and that the comfortable don't want to be reminded of.

Jeremiah's crime? Telling the truth. That's what prophets do. Not fortune-telling, not palm-reading—truth-telling. And the thing about truth is, it tends to upset the status quo.

And then we turn to the Gospel. The crowds are buzzing. The leaders are whispering. The temperature around Jesus is rising. Some say, "This is truly the Prophet." Others say, "This is the Christ." And still others say, "Can the Christ come from Galilee?" (Jn 7:40–41). You can almost hear the disdain in their voices. Galilee—too backwater, too ordinary, too wrong to produce anything good.

And what's remarkable is that no one is questioning Jesus because he's done something wrong. He hasn't lied. He hasn't stolen. He hasn't broken a law. No—He's being opposed because He speaks with authority, and that threatens those who are comfortable with control.

Enter St. Vincent Ferrer.

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Born in Valencia in the 14th century, Vincent lived in a Church that was in crisis. The Great Western Schism had ripped the Church in two—rival popes, rival allegiances, confusion from Rome to the furthest monasteries in Europe. Into that mess stepped a man who didn't crave office or title—he craved truth. He didn't ask for ease—he asked for courage. He didn't walk the road of power—he walked the road of preaching, repentance, and reconciliation.

Vincent Ferrer took to the roads of Europe with one mission: to preach the Gospel in all its clarity and all its discomfort. He told the powerful to repent. He told the clergy to reform. He told the people to turn to Christ with their whole heart. He spoke in public squares, in churches, in marketplaces—anywhere someone would listen. And often, even when they wouldn't.

And for his trouble? He was misunderstood, maligned, and at times rejected. But he kept going. Because he knew that when the Church is confused, when the world is divided, when people are weary of scandal and spin—what they need is not spin control. They need saints.

Jeremiah was a prophet. Jesus is the Truth. Vincent Ferrer was a preacher who refused to stop proclaiming Christ, even when the voices around him grew loud with opposition.

And so now the question turns to us. We may not be prophets or preachers or popes. But we're disciples. And that comes with a responsibility.

So I want to ask—and I ask these as questions for Lent, not as accusations:

- When have I stayed silent because the truth was too uncomfortable?
- Have I let cynicism or fear keep me from standing up for what's right?
- Have I forgotten that the Eucharist I receive strengthens me not just for personal devotion, but for public witness?

The Eucharist is the Body of Christ—given for us. But it's also the mission of Christ—handed to us. We take His body, and we become His body in the world. That means we speak when it's easier to stay silent. We defend the vulnerable when it's easier to walk away. We work for peace when division is the easier option. And we do it not with arrogance, but with integrity. Not with violence, but with love.

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St. Vincent Ferrer was once called “the angel of the Apocalypse.” That wasn’t because he brought destruction—but because he brought urgency. He reminded the Church that we don’t have forever to get this right. That there are souls at stake. That truth is not a luxury for the brave—it’s the daily duty of every disciple.

So this Lent, let’s pray—not just to be comforted, but to be courageous. Not just to hear the truth, but to live it. And not just to receive the Body of Christ—but to become it, in every act of justice, every word of truth, every step of love.

Because the world doesn’t need more noise. It needs more Jeremiah. More Jesus. More Vincent Ferrer. It needs us—to be who we say we are.

Amen.

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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.