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Easter Monday

Date: Monday, April 21, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Acts 2:14, 22–33
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 16:1–2a, 5, 7–11 | **Response:** Psalm 16:1
Gospel Acclamation: Psalm 118:24
Gospel Reading: Matthew 28:8–15
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

They ran. Feet pounding the earth, hearts burning with confusion and wonder, they ran. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had gone to the tomb expecting silence, the weight of finality. They went to honour what they thought was the end. Instead, they were met by an angel, an empty tomb, and a mission: "Go quickly and tell his disciples." And so, they ran.

We have heard this story many times. Perhaps we think we already know what it means. But we should not rush past its radical simplicity. There is no proof offered. No doctrine unfolded. Just absence, announcement, and action. And then —unexpectedly, intimately—Jesus meets them on the road.

The Risen One's first appearance is not to religious leaders, not even to the Twelve, but to two women who had remained faithful through the darkness. This is the grammar of Resurrection: fidelity, mission, and encounter.

The women's love becomes the soil in which resurrection faith can grow. They are entrusted with the first Easter proclamation. But even as this news begins to spread, another story is being sown. A lie—endorsed by authority, sustained by power, paid for in silver. The first resistance to the Resurrection is not violent persecution—it is quiet distortion. A calculated narrative to make resurrection sound like fantasy, and fear look like wisdom.

This should make us pause.

Because it is not the Roman Empire, but religious insiders—those closest to the tradition—who struggle most to accept the new life God is bringing forth. As consecrated religious, that part should disturb us. It is a caution, not a condem-

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nation. When are we tempted to manage rather than proclaim? To guard the tomb instead of run from it?

We still stand between two stories.
On one side: fidelity, courage, a love that runs.
On the other: caution, control, and the temptation to tame the Gospel.

The Resurrection is not a private comfort. It is a public upheaval. And the challenge is not just to believe in it—but to live as if it has really happened.

Peter does just that. In our first reading, he proclaims with clarity and courage: "This Jesus, whom you crucified, God raised up!" This is not a philosophical idea. It is an interruption of history. God has acted. The grave has been broken. And Peter—who once denied Jesus out of fear—now stands with boldness, quoting Psalm 16: "You will not abandon my soul to the grave."

This is Easter faith: not a denial of suffering, but a refusal to believe it has the final word.

And so must our lives be.

As religious, we have not given our lives to a theory, but to a Person. A Crucified and Risen Lord. Our vows are not just noble commitments—they are signs that we believe death has been defeated.

Poverty: a refusal to place our trust in material possessions, embracing the freedom of radical dependence on God, who alone provides all that we need and calls us to live in solidarity with the poor.
Chastity: a bold affirmation that true communion and love are possible without possession, mirroring the love of Christ, who was wholly given in love, and calling us to live in the freedom of self-gift.
Obedience: a commitment to discerning and responding to the will of God, finding freedom not in our own will but in surrender to the divine call, as Christ himself said, "Not my will, but yours be done."

If Christ is truly risen, then we must be witnesses—not only in word, but in the pattern of our lives.
Not only personally, but communally. Our ministries, our relationships, our presence must speak of that hope and joy in the resurrection.

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And in Zambia, in 2025, this witness is not optional.

We live among people burdened by rising costs, youth without jobs or hope, families stretched thin. There is real fatigue, not only economically but spiritually. Disillusionment. Frustration. Sometimes even in the Church.
And yet—this is exactly where Resurrection must be proclaimed.

Not as escape, but as God's answer to the world's ache.
Not by slogans, but by lives transfigured.

This is what the Risen Christ still does: he comes to console, to commission, to send.
St Ignatius, in the Fourth Week of the Exercises, invites us to receive this joy of the Risen Lord, and to feel it not just as personal consolation but as apostolic fuel.

And in this Easter light, we must speak also of Pope Francis.

His death marks the end of a chapter - one that I think will be pivotal in Church history. But the Spirit he listened to is not silent.
Like the women at the tomb, he too ran—unafraid to bring the Gospel into new terrain, unafraid of dust, disagreement, or the discomfort of the journey.

He called us to become a Church that walks together—a synodal Church—where listening is as sacred as speaking, and where the Holy Spirit breathes through the entire People of God.
He reminded us that everything is connected: creation, community, economy, and the infinite dignity of every life.
That the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are not separate songs.
That fraternity is not just an aspiration—it is our vocation.

His teachings in Laudato Si' and Fratelli Tutti were not just encyclicals. They were invitations. Invitations to conversion, to communion, to courage.

His papacy is now sadly over. But his witness remains.
A shepherd who smelt of his sheep.
A pastor who trusted the Spirit more than structures, and desired that every person of good will can receive a blessing.

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A follower of the Risen Christ who believed that loving mercy is the face of God who wanted to encounter everyone, *Todos, todos, todos* as Pope Francis memorably said.

So as we gather today—in grief, in gratitude, in Easter light—let us not simply honour him with words. Let us carry forward the work he urged us to embrace. Let us reflect personally:

- Where in our lives have we met the Risen Lord—not just in comfort, but in mission?
- Where are we tempted to stand still, when the Gospel is calling us to run?
- What lies or fears still need to be rolled away like stones from a tomb?

Let us not explain away the Resurrection.
Let us not reduce Easter to a liturgical season.
Les us not remain fixed in our grief.

Let us, like Mary Magdalene, go.
Let us, like Peter, speak.
Let us, like Ignatius, rejoice and serve.
And let us, like Pope Francis—now called home to the Father—walk with the Risen Christ,
bearing hope, extending mercy, and shaping a Church that listens as she teaches, walks humbly with the excluded, and journeys together in faith.

May the Risen Lord, whom he loved and served with courage, receive him in peace. And may we carry forward the dream he entrusted to us.

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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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