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Easter Saturday

Date: Saturday, April 26, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Acts 4:13–21
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 118:1, 14–15b, 16–21 | **Response:** Psalm 118:21a
Gospel Acclamation: Psalm 118:24
Gospel Reading: Mark 16:9–15
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

It is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard.

This is the cry of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin, an echo that reverberates through the centuries, a defiant declaration that no earthly power can silence. But what do they truly mean? What have they seen? What have they heard? To the rulers and elders, these two men are unlettered, unremarkable. They do not come wielding wealth or armies. And yet, in them, the authorities recognize something unsettling: they have been with Jesus.

And this, my friends, is the heart of the Easter proclamation. Not an argument. Not an ideology. A witness. An encounter. A love so compelling that it must be spoken.

We live in an age where words often come cheaply, where a flood of noise can dull the power of truth. But for Peter and John, and for those who walk in their footsteps, this message is no ordinary word. It is the cry of the empty tomb, the proclamation that the world has been changed forever. The stone has been rolled away, and no power of death or oppression can ever be the same again.

And yet, even as the first reading speaks of the courage of the apostles, the Gospel reminds us of the fragility of faith. The risen Christ appears to Mary Magdalene, yet the disciples refuse to believe. He appears to two others, and still they doubt. It is not until he stands among them and rebukes them for their hardness of heart that belief begins to stir. How often are we like these disciples? How often does fear or skepticism keep us from seeing what is before us?

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The early Church knew this struggle well. The newly baptized, in their white robes, celebrated their first Easter as Christians, but they, too, had to walk forward in faith. The glow of baptism would fade. The trials of the world would press in. They would have to choose, day after day, to live as those who had encountered the Risen Lord.

The same is true for us. Here in Zambia, as in every part of the world, the challenge of the Gospel remains: Will we witness to what we have seen and heard? Will we allow the resurrection to transform not just our hearts, but our families, our workplaces, our society?

The witness of Peter and John is not merely personal; it is public. Their proclamation has consequences. The Sanhedrin tries to silence them because the Gospel threatens the world's old ways — of power hoarded, of truth suppressed, of the poor left to suffer unseen.

If Christ is risen, then injustice is not the final word. If Christ is risen, then no system, no government, no economy can claim ultimate authority over human dignity. This is why the Church speaks of justice. This is why we proclaim the dignity of every person, from the child born into poverty to the elder abandoned in loneliness. To believe in the resurrection is to believe that no one is forgotten, that no one is expendable.

St. Ignatius teaches us to pray for the grace to see the world as Christ sees it. So today, I invite you to enter the scene of the Gospel with your imagination. Stand among the disciples as Christ rebukes them for their unbelief. Feel their shame, their longing. And then, hear his command: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature." Hear those words spoken to you. What does that look like in your life? How are you being called to witness — not only by your words, but even more by your life — that Christ is risen?

Here are three questions to carry with you this week:

- When have I been tempted to remain silent about my faith? What holds me back?
- Where have I seen the power of Christ's resurrection at work in my own life or in the world around me?
- What concrete action can I take this week to bear witness to the dignity and hope of the resurrection in my family, my workplace, my community?

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And today, even as we proclaim the Resurrection, we also turn our hearts to Rome. This morning, we celebrated the funeral Mass of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, in the square of St. Peter's Basilica. He is now laid to rest in the Basilica of St Mary Major, a place he loved so much — where he often went to pray before and after every journey, entrusting his ministry to Our Lady, *Maria Salus Populi Romani*-Mary Protectress of the Roman people.

Pope Francis spent his life reminding us that to follow Christ is to walk with the poor, to seek out the lost, to proclaim mercy with courage. Throughout his ministry, he would often ask us, very simply and humbly: "Please pray for me." And now, as he stands among the communion of saints, we ask him to pray for us — that we might continue the mission entrusted to us with the same humility, the same boldness, the same joy.

Let us now entrust him to the mercy of God, and entrust ourselves to his prayers:

Short Prayer for Pope Francis

Let us pray.

God of endless life,
we give you thanks for your servant Pope Francis,
who bore witness to the joy of the Gospel in our time.
As he now stands before you,
we ask that he may intercede for us —
that we, too, may live with courage, tenderness, and hope,
proclaiming by our lives that Christ is risen.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Special Intention for Pope Francis during the Prayers of the Faithful.

For Pope Francis,
faithful servant of the Gospel, who bore the cross of Christ with humility and joy:
that he may now share fully in the glory of the Resurrection,
and that his prayer may strengthen us as we continue the mission of the Gospel.
We pray to the Lord.
Lord, hear our prayer.

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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.