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Wednesday of the 2nd Week of Easter

Date: Wednesday, April 30, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Acts 5:17–26
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 34:2–9 | **Response:** Psalm 34:7a
Gospel Acclamation: John 3:16
Gospel Reading: John 3:16–21
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

The Gospel today speaks of a cosmic struggle—a contest between light and darkness, life and death, salvation and sin. Jesus reveals to us the very heart of God's mission on earth: to bring light into the world. The verse we often repeat, "For God so loved the world" (Jn 3:16), is a proclamation of God's unconditional love. It is a declaration that God does not love abstractly or distantly, but with an intimacy so profound that it draws near to the brokenness of the world. In sending His only Son, He sought to illuminate the shadows where sin has cast its veil. Yet, as we see in the Gospel, the world "preferred darkness to light" (Jn 3:19). The tragedy is not that the light came and was rejected, but that it was rejected by those who, in their hearts, feared the exposure of their sin, the truth of their lives.

But Jesus, ever the teacher, does not leave us in despair. He knows this struggle is not over. He points to the way out—the way to life, a life of truth, a life in the light. In Him, we encounter the fullness of God's plan for salvation—a salvation that is not only for the few, not only for the select, but for all. The cross, an instrument of death, becomes the bridge to eternal life. The Resurrection is not merely an event in the past; it is a present reality that invites us into the light, to be remade as people of light.

The First Reading from the Acts of the Apostles offers us a striking illustration of the tension between light and darkness, between the forces of the world and the new life in Christ. We find the apostles in chains, arrested for their bold proclamation of the risen Christ. The high priest and the Sadducees, who had conspired against Jesus, now take their jealousy and fear out on the apostles. But God's light is not thwarted by the darkness of human fear and pride. In a remarkable display of divine intervention, the apostles are freed from prison by an an-

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gel and sent right back into the temple to continue preaching. Here, we see a God who will not let His mission be stopped—no matter how much the world resists, no matter how powerful the forces against Him may seem. This story is not just a tale of miraculous escape, but a demonstration of the resilience of God's work in the world. Even in the face of opposition, even in the face of danger, the Gospel will spread, and the light will not be overcome by the darkness.

How often, in our own lives, do we find ourselves in moments of darkness, feeling as if we are imprisoned by fear, doubt, or despair? How often do we look around and see forces of injustice and suffering that seem insurmountable? The story of the apostles is a reminder that the light of Christ is always stronger than any darkness. We are called, like them, to stand firm in the face of opposition, to continue to proclaim the Gospel of hope and love even when it seems that all around us is crumbling. The Resurrection is not just a past event but a present reality, a source of strength that propels us forward.

The Psalm today reminds us of the constant presence of God, whose "angel encamps around those who fear him" (Ps 34:7). It is a prayer of trust and confidence, a declaration that even in our struggles, God is near, watching over us, protecting us. He invites us to take refuge in Him, to trust in His goodness and mercy, especially in times of trial. The psalmist's declaration—"taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps 34:8)—is an invitation to a deep, personal encounter with God's goodness. This is not just an intellectual or theological exercise, but a lived experience that can be recalled in remembrance. The light of Christ is not abstract or distant; it is something we can taste, touch, and feel in our hearts, even in the midst of life's most difficult moments.

Today, we also celebrate the Feast of Our Lady, Mother of Africa—a Marian title that evokes tenderness, protection, and hope for this continent. Originating from Algeria, this devotion honors Mary as one who gathers all her children across the vast and varied cultures of Africa under her maternal care. She is a mother who knows the sufferings of her people, who walks with the poor, and who intercedes for peace, unity, and justice across our lands. Just as Mary stood at the foot of the cross, she stands today at the foot of many crosses—of conflict, poverty, and oppression—and she invites us to be bearers of Christ's light in those very places. In her, we find not only consolation, but also a courageous model of faith and resilience.

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In Zambia, and in many parts of Africa, the call to be people of the light takes on particular urgency. The Resurrection compels us to stand in solidarity with the vulnerable, to speak out against injustice, and to labor for a society where the dignity of every person is upheld. Our Lady Mother of Africa points us to her Son, the true Light of the world, and urges us to trust that, even in our darkest hours, God's light will prevail.

Saint Pius V, whom we also remember today, stands as a powerful witness to the transformative power of faith. As pope, he led the Church with a deep sense of devotion to reform, to justice, and to the preservation of the faith. His commitment to the truth of the Gospel, even in the face of significant challenges, is a reminder to us all that living the truth, though often difficult, is always the path to freedom and life. He exemplifies the spirit of courage and perseverance that we are called to embody in our own lives as followers of Christ.

As we reflect on this morning's readings, and as we honour Our Lady Mother of Africa, we are invited to consider how the light of Christ illuminates our own lives. How can we, like the apostles, be bold in proclaiming this light to a world that often prefers the darkness? How can we live the justice and love of the Resurrection in our daily actions, especially in a world that needs the light of Christ more than ever?

And so I propose that consider the following questions in our prayer today:

- As we enter more deeply into the Easter season, how can I more intentionally invite the light of Christ into the areas of my life that feel dark or hopeless?
- How can I be a witness to the light of Christ in my community, especially to those who are suffering or marginalized?
- Reflecting on the call to justice in today's readings, what concrete steps can I take this week to live out the dignity of the human person in my relationships and actions?
- How can I honour Our Lady Mother of Africa in my prayer and action—especially by imitating her maternal care for the suffering and her faith in God's justice and mercy?

Prayer for the Cardinals preparing for Conclave

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God of wisdom and grace,
you never cease to call your Church forward.

As the College of Cardinals gathers to discern and elect a new pope,
grant them inner freedom—free from fear, ambition, and division—
that they may be truly available to your Spirit.

Give them listening hearts,
attentive to the cries of the world and the needs of your Church.
Help them to listen to your Holy Spirit, whom you send to guide them,
that they may recognize your desire and faithfully follow your will.

Unite us all in prayer,
that this moment may be one of deep communion,
true discernment, and renewed hope for your Church.

With Mary, Mother of the Church, we entrust this time to you,
through Christ our Lord.
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.