



Tuesday of the 3rd Week of Easter



Date: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Acts 7:51–8

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 31:3c–4, 6, 7b, 8a, 17, 21ab | **Response:** Psalm 31:6a

Gospel Acclamation: John 6:35ab

Gospel Reading: John 6:30–35

Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia.

There are moments in history when a person stands before the world—accused, condemned, seemingly abandoned—yet utterly certain of the truth they proclaim. Today, we stand with Stephen, the first martyr of the Church, a man who doesn’t look at the mob that rages before him, but beyond them—into eternity. “Behold,” he cries, “I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

Stephen does not flinch. He does not fight. He does not curse. He surrenders—but his surrender is not defeat. It is the surrender of Christ himself: arms stretched wide, heart exposed, truth made vulnerable in the face of violence. It is the surrender of love that refuses to become hate, of truth that stands unshaken in the shadow of injustice. It is a surrender that does not end in silence—but in resurrection.

His final words echo those of our Lord on the Cross: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” But even more astonishing is what follows. With his last breath, he prays not for deliverance—but for mercy. “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” No vengeance. No bitterness. Just the raw, radiant grace of forgiveness. And in that moment, the seeds of redemption are planted in a young man named Saul—who watches, silent and complicit. That same Saul will one day become Paul, the greatest missionary of the Gospel.

In today’s Gospel, we meet another crowd—not with stones in hand, but skepticism in their hearts. “What sign can you do?” they ask Jesus. They remind him of Moses, who gave their ancestors manna in the desert. “Prove yourself,” they

demand. And Jesus, who could have dazzled them with signs, chooses instead to speak a deeper truth: “It was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, but my Father who gives you the true bread. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

This is the great scandal of the Incarnation:

The people expected power—but they were given presence.

They wanted a warrior—but they received a wounded healer.

They longed for a sign—but were offered a Saviour who breaks bread.

This is the connection between Stephen’s martyrdom and the Bread of Life: to follow Christ is to embrace a kind of power the world does not understand. It is the power of surrender, of self-gift, of becoming bread for others. The Eucharist is not merely a ritual; it is a way of being. It is the call to be broken and shared for the life of the world.

And yet—how often are we like the crowd? Demanding proof. Demanding miracles. Demanding that God conform to our expectations, rather than allowing Him to transform our hearts. How often are we like Saul? Standing by while injustice unfolds, silent, detached, and afraid?

But Stephen and Jesus both call us beyond this.

They call us to a faith that does not retreat in fear, but stands firm in love.

A faith that does not wait for signs, but chooses trust.

A faith that forgives even when forgiveness seems impossible.

And what does this look like—here, now, in our time?

It looks like the Church in Zambia, standing with those who suffer under economic injustice, advocating for those deprived of dignity, becoming—just as Pope Francis of beloved memory said—a “field hospital” for the hurting and wounded.

It looks like the parent who chooses peace over punishment.

The neighbour who speaks up when others remain silent.

The person who becomes bread for others—ordinary, broken, shared, and full of grace.

So what about us?

Where is Christ asking *you* to trust, even when all you want is certainty?
Who stands before you, needing your forgiveness?
What would it mean—really mean—for you to become Eucharist this week?

May we, like Stephen, lift our eyes to heaven even when the stones fly.
May we, like Jesus, become bread in a world hungry for mercy.
May we, like Paul, let the mercy of God undo us—and make us new.

For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

And that bread still comes.
And that life is still offered.
And that truth still triumphs.

On this eve of the Conclave, let us pray together for the Cardinal electors:

Prayer for the Cardinals Preparing for Conclave

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.