Fr Matthew Charlesworth, SJ
https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/

Wednesday of the 3rd Week of Easter

Date: Wednesday, May 7, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Acts 8:1b–8
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 66:1–3a, 4–7a | **Response:** Psalm 66:1
Gospel Acclamation: John 6:40
Gospel Reading: John 6:35–40
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

My brothers,

Tonight, as the College of Cardinals gathers to discern the next leader of our Church, we are invited to reflect on how God's mission unfolds in mysterious and sometimes challenging ways. The readings today provide profound insight into this process: through moments of suffering and loss, the Gospel continues to spread—often in unexpected directions.

In the first reading, we witness the martyrdom of Stephen. His violent death seems like a tragic end, yet it sparks the scattering of believers. In this scattering, the Gospel spreads beyond the walls of Jerusalem, reaching new places and new hearts. What seems like defeat becomes the very means of the Gospel's expansion. This teaches us that God's providence is at work even in the darkest moments, turning what we might view as an ending into a new beginning.

We then encounter Philip, who, rather than hiding from persecution, enters Samaria as an evangelist. He brings the Good News to those once seen as outsiders. In this moment, we see how the Gospel transcends boundaries—God's love knows no limits. It's a radical, inclusive message that invites all into the embrace of God's mercy.

Brothers, we are called to live out this transformative mission together. It's not just about proclamation of the Gospel, but about how lives can be transformed by it. Our mission, like Philip's, is not to stay in one place but to move, to cross boundaries, and to meet Christ in the most unexpected places. Every encounter, every moment, is an opportunity to discern and respond to God's call in that particular moment, with that particular person, in that particular place.

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 · https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-05may-07-yc-et-03/

So it is in our community, we are not merely called to proclaim the Gospel with words but with lives that are transformed by it. St Ignatius teaches that this transformation happens not in isolation but always in community. It's in the shared life of prayer, of work, and of companionship that we help one another respond more fully to God's will for each of us.

Tonight, I invite us to reflect: How is God transforming us as a community? How are we being reshaped to become more fully His instruments of peace and healing? Ignatian spirituality invites us to use the Examen daily—to look back on our lives on this particular day and see where God has been at work, where the Spirit has moved, and where we have resisted God's invitations to receive the grace he never tires of offering us. In the same way, we are invited to discern the movement of the Spirit in our community. How is God calling us to break open the Gospel in new and unexpected ways?

The Gospel this evening shows us that God's Word can break through even the darkest moments. Take Saul, who once persecuted Christians but who will soon become Paul, the great apostle. His dramatic conversion happens through an encounter with the risen Christ. This moment reminds us that grace is never passive; it disrupts, transforms, and calls us to conversion. In that conversion, we are drawn deeper into God's plan—not just for us as individuals but for us as a community united in mission.

As Jesuits, we are called to live our mission in unity. We are not just pilgrims on a journey; we are companions in mission. How often does Ignatian spirituality remind us that the Church is not just an institution but the living Body of Christ? As such, we are called to be broken, and to recognise our brokeness, so that we can be given for the life of the world.

The Jubilee of Hope, which began this year, reminds us that God constantly calls us to conversion. We are not called to walk this journey alone but together, with one another and with the poor. As we continue this synodal process, we are invited to listen—not just with our ears but with our hearts, allowing ourselves to be transformed as we discern God's will for us.

And this evening, as the Cardinals gather for the papal conclave, we are called to pray for them. How is God calling us to serve the Church in this moment? How is He inviting us to live the Gospel more fully, here in Zambia, in our province,

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 · https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-05may-07-yc-et-03/

and in the world? The Church moves forward not by separating tradition from change, but by embracing both in harmony. We honour the history of the Church that has brought us here while remaining open to the signs of the times—chief among them is the concept of synodality as the privileged way of implementing Vatican II in our time. For the Gospel is always unfolding, desiring to be proclaimed anew, and we are invited to move with it, always faithful to its transformative and salvific power.

These last few weeks of Easter in the life of the Church have been one of both grief and hope. We mourn the loss of Pope Francis, a leader who called us to embrace the poor and marginalized, but we also look to the future with anticipation and hope. We pray for the Cardinals that they may choose a Pope who embodies wisdom, courage, and a deep commitment to the Gospel, and who is able to continue taking the Church forward.

So, as we close, I invite us to reflect:

- Where is God calling us to deeper discernment?
- Where is He at work in my life, in places I might not expect?
- How can we, as a Jesuit community, be agents of the Gospel, bringing peace and hope to the world, through our deeds, but also through our prayers?
- And in the spirit of Ignatian spirituality, let us ask: Where is Christ inviting me to find Him in all things—especially in times of difficulty and division?

Brothers, let us take a moment to pray, to reflect, and to listen for God's voice, and pray that the Cardinals might be given the grace to do God's will too.

Prayer for the Cardinals in 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.

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 · https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-05may-07-yc-et-03/

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.

Source: https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-05may-07-yc-et-03/

This homily is shared for personal and pastoral use. Please attribute the author and do not alter the meaning when quoting. If you wish this homily to be translated - there is an option on the website which will allow you to translate it into the language of your choice.

Licenced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) license.

The author does not speak for the Society of Jesus or for the Catholic Church.

Receive Fr Matthew Charlesworth's Homilies on **WhatsApp**

Receive Fr Matthew Charlesworth's Homilies on **Telegram**

Receive Fr Matthew Charlesworth's Homilies on **Signal**

Scan for Website on **Clearnet**

Scan for Onion Mirror **via TOR**

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.