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

Saturday of the 3rd Week of Easter

Date: Saturday, May 10, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Acts 9:31–42
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 116:12–17 | **Response:** Psalm 116:12
Gospel Acclamation: John 6:63c, 68c
Gospel Reading: John 6:60–69
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

A moment of decision, a choice that defines everything. In today's Gospel, we find the disciples at such a moment. They stand at the crossroads of faith and doubt, where the words of Jesus challenge them beyond comfort. "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" they murmur. And many, unwilling to walk the harder path, turn away.

Jesus does not chase after them. He does not dilute the truth to make it more palatable. Instead, He turns to the Twelve and asks a question that rings through history: "Do you also want to leave?" It is Simon Peter who speaks, his voice carrying the weight of faith and human frailty together: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

This scene echoes another moment, when Joshua, standing before Israel, asked: "Choose this day whom you will serve" (Josh 24:15). Faith is not merely inherited; it is chosen. And every day, we too must make this choice anew.

In the Acts of the Apostles, we see the power of this choice at work. Peter, the very man who declared his faith in today's Gospel, walks among the people as a vessel of God's mercy. He speaks words of healing to Aeneas, bedridden for eight years: "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up!" And to the lifeless body of Tabitha, he says, "Tabitha, rise up!" The words of Christ, spoken through the faith of Peter, bring life where there was despair. Here, in these acts, we see the Easter message incarnate: the power of the Resurrection is not a distant promise but a present reality.

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What makes Peter's miracles so striking is not only their dramatic nature but their setting. Joppa, a city of traders and foreigners, was where Jonah once fled from God's call and where Peter himself would soon receive the vision that the Gospel was for all people. Tabitha, also called Dorcas, was known for her works of charity, embodying the Church's mission to care for the poor. When she dies, the widows—those whom society most often forgets—stand weeping, showing Peter the garments she had made for them. These are the tangible signs of a faith that serves. And here, God responds by restoring her life, affirming that acts of love are never lost in His sight.

The Psalmist asks, "How shall I repay the Lord for all His benefits to me?" and answers, "I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord." This is the response of gratitude, of recognizing that faith demands something of us. It is not enough to receive; we must give. The Eucharist itself—the Bread of Life from today's Gospel—is both a gift and a call to action.

This call is urgent. In our world, in our own Zambia, there are those who hunger, not just for bread, but for dignity, for justice, for a future they can believe in. The Church must be as Peter was in Joppa: a source of healing, of hope, of restoration. It is not enough to believe in the Resurrection; we must live it. We must be the hands that raise up the fallen, the voice that proclaims truth, the heart that does not turn away from suffering.

Here, the life of Saint John of Ávila offers a luminous example. A priest, mystic, and reformer in 16th-century Spain, he poured out his life in service of the Gospel, preaching with power and clarity, forming clergy, and offering spiritual guidance to saints and sinners alike. In a time of upheaval, he did not retreat into comfort or compromise; he proclaimed Christ boldly, with both tenderness and conviction. His writings and witness remind us that true reform begins in the heart and flows outward in mission. His life asks us: Who is waiting to be nourished by the truth we have received? Who around us needs to hear the Gospel not only preached, but lived?

Faith, then, is not for the faint of heart. It is for those willing to wrestle with hard teachings, to serve without counting the cost, to trust that even when others turn away, Christ remains. And so, today, as we stand before the same question posed to the Twelve, let us answer with Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

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As we go forth, let us carry with us three questions for prayer and reflection:

- When have I found Christ's teachings challenging, and how have I responded—by drawing closer or turning away?
- Like Tabitha, what tangible acts of love am I offering to those around me? Do I see my faith as something lived in service?
- Where is God calling me to be an instrument of healing and hope? How can I, in my own way, say to someone, "Rise up!"?

May the Easter light guide our steps, and may our faith be bold, unwavering, and ever new.

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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.