



Thursday of the 4th Week of Easter



Date: Thursday, May 15, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Acts 13:13–25

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 89:2–3, 21–22, 25, 27 | **Response:** Psalm 89:2

Gospel Acclamation: Revelation 1:5ab

Gospel Reading: John 13:16–20

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

As we gather in this Easter season, the readings today invite us to reflect deeply on mission, on the reception of the Word, and on the intimate relationship we share with Jesus. We find ourselves journeying with Saint Paul as he preaches the Gospel, with Jesus as He offers His final words to His disciples, and with the eternal promise of God’s presence in our lives.

In the First Reading from Acts, we hear Paul’s sermon in a synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia. Paul, alongside Barnabas, steps into the role of the missionary, proclaiming the salvation found in Jesus Christ. He boldly recapitulates the history of Israel, highlighting God’s faithfulness to His people, and shows how the promises made to David have been fulfilled in Jesus: “From this man’s descendants, God, according to His promise, has brought to Israel a savior, Jesus” (Acts 13:23). Paul’s words echo the ancient covenant, but now they are charged with a living hope. The promise made to Israel is not simply remembered—it is fulfilled. Jesus Christ is the Savior, and He is with us.

Paul’s sermon is not merely a recounting of sacred history; it is a call to see with new eyes. Jesus is not just the continuation of the old but the beginning of something profoundly new. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus draws all people—Jew and Gentile—into a new covenant of love and salvation. Paul’s mission mirrors Jesus’: just as the Father sent the Son, so now the Son sends others to continue the work of announcing the Kingdom.

Today's Psalm—Psalm 89—reminds us of God's steadfast love, an enduring promise that remains firm even in times of trial. "I will establish your descendants forever and build your throne for all generations" (Psalm 89:4). This promise resonates in the Easter season, when the resurrection becomes the definitive sign of God's faithfulness. We are called to trust this promise, especially when we face discouragement, injustice, or suffering. God has established His throne not in power and might, but in the person of Jesus Christ—and through Him, we are all invited into His reign. In a world where the poor and marginalized often go unseen, this Psalm is a reminder to recognize the image of God in every person.

In the Gospel, Jesus prepares His disciples for what lies ahead: "Whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me" (John 13:20). These words follow the intimate and humble gesture of Jesus washing His disciples' feet. That act of service becomes the template for mission. Jesus is forming His disciples not just to preach, but to serve. He invites them—and us—to embody humility, love, and mercy.

This Gospel reminds us that mission is not just about what we do, but who we are in relationship to Jesus. To receive someone sent by Jesus is to receive Jesus Himself. And to receive Jesus is to receive the One who sent Him. The mission of the Church, then, is not merely a task to complete, but a relationship to live. It is about being deeply rooted in Christ and open to encountering Him in others—especially in those who are overlooked or forgotten.

As we reflect on these readings, we are reminded that the Easter season is not only a celebration of Christ's victory over death, but also a summons to live that victory in our own lives. We are sent—each in our own way—to bear witness to the resurrection, not only in words but in actions. In a world marked by division and inequality, we are called to recognize the risen Christ in our neighbor, to serve others with humility, and to proclaim the Good News through compassion and justice.

In Zambia, and across our region, where people continue to long for dignity, peace, and hope, the words of the Psalm—"I will establish your descendants forever"—become a quiet assurance. God's promises endure. And just as He established His reign through Jesus, He continues to establish His Kingdom through our acts of love, service, and faith.

So let us ask: how do we receive Christ in the people and circumstances around us? How do we share His love with others, especially those most in need? The mission to which we are called is not always grand or dramatic. It often takes place in the ordinary, in the conversations we have, in the kindness we extend, in the justice we pursue.

Let us close with three questions to carry into the days ahead:

- How can I more intentionally receive Christ in the people I encounter, especially those who are most marginalized or in need?
- In what ways can I serve others with the humility and love that Jesus demonstrated by washing the feet of His disciples?
- How can I live out my Christian mission in the everyday moments of my life—at home, at work, or in my community?

May these questions guide us as we seek to live the resurrection each day, and may we become faithful witnesses of Christ's love in the world.

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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.