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Tuesday of the 6th Week of Easter

Date: Tuesday, May 27, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Acts 16:22–34
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 138:1–3, 7c–8 | **Response:** Psalm 138:7c
Gospel Acclamation: John 16:7, 13
Gospel Reading: John 16:5–11
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

They were beaten with rods, stripped of their dignity, locked in stocks deep within a prison. Not for crimes of violence or theft, but for proclaiming Christ. Paul and Silas, bruised and bleeding, victims of injustice, respond not with curses but with song. In the belly of oppression, they pray. They sing. And heaven listens.

At midnight, an earthquake shakes the foundations—not just of the prison, but of the social order that put them there. The doors fly open, the chains fall away. But no one runs. Freedom comes not in escape, but in encounter. The jailer, trembling, asks the question that every heart must one day ask: "What must I do to be saved?" And the answer is given—not in a rebuke, but in baptism. The very man who held them captive is welcomed into communion. Grace turns enemies into family.

This is no mere prison break. It is a portrait of divine justice: not retributive, but restorative. Not vengeance, but transformation. In a world that punishes first and listens later, the Gospel opens another path—where wrongdoers are not destroyed but invited into new life.

Psalm 138 gives voice to this confidence: "Your right hand saves me." These are not words of comfort written from a palace, but a cry from the edge—from the exile, the wounded, the falsely accused. It is a cry heard today in courtrooms and prisons, in the stories of the trafficked and the voiceless, in the lives of so many in Zambia who endure poverty, corruption, and systemic injustice. The Psalm reminds us: God's justice is not abstract. It arrives in the moment of desperation, in the very place the world overlooks.

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In the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks to a group of confused and sorrowful disciples: “It is better for you that I go,” He says. How can absence be a gift? Because His departure ushers in the Holy Spirit—the Advocate, the Paraclete. Not only Comforter, but Prosecutor. Not only Guide, but Truth-Teller. The Spirit does not simply defend the innocent—She convicts the world: of sin, of false righteousness, of counterfeit justice. This is a courtroom like no other, where the verdict is not death, but invitation; not condemnation, but conversion.

The Spirit still convicts today. She unsettles complacency. She whispers truth into the conscience of the powerful and gives courage to the oppressed. And if we dare to listen, She sends us—into the jails and the streets, into boardrooms and classrooms, into the very systems where injustice hides behind respectability.

This divine justice, revealed in the Resurrection, is the triumph of mercy over violence. The empty tomb is God’s great vindication—not just of Christ, but of all who suffer for righteousness. It tells us that no chain, no verdict, no grave has the final word.

And it is here that St. Augustine of Canterbury steps into the frame. Sent from Rome into pagan Anglo-Saxon lands, he did not come with force but with faith. Like Paul and Silas, he entered unknown territory singing the Gospel. He built not empires, but communities of mercy. He trusted that hearts could be won not by conquest, but by witness.

We are called to do the same. In our lives, we too meet injustice—not always in dramatic ways, but in quiet moments: when a colleague is silenced for speaking truth, when a child is mistreated for their poverty, when a neighbour’s dignity is slowly eroded by corruption or neglect. How do we respond? Do we strike back—or do we sing? I don’t mean we literally break out into song (though praise is always good!), but do we turn to prayer, to acts of kindness, to bearing witness to the truth of the Gospel in our words and actions? Do we add to the noise of judgment—or do we listen for the Spirit’s quiet prompting?

And perhaps the most radical invitation today is this: to forgive. To look, as Paul and Silas did, at the jailer—not as an enemy, but as a soul in need of saving. The Gospel doesn’t just free us from chains; it frees us from bitterness. It turns victims into vessels of grace.

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So we ask:

- What chains—visible or invisible—still bind me, and what song of faith might I sing in the midst of them?
- Who is the “jailer” in my life—someone I resent, fear, or blame—and how might the Spirit be calling me to offer mercy instead of judgment?
- Where is the Advocate sending me this week—to speak truth, to defend the vulnerable, to be a voice of God’s justice in a world that so often gets it wrong?

Let us walk into the world as Paul and Silas did—not naïve, but unafraid. Not embittered, but singing. For the Spirit has been given. The tomb is empty. And justice, God’s justice, will not be silenced.

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.