



Wednesday of the 6th Week of Easter



Date: Wednesday, May 28, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Acts 17:15, 22–18:1

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 148:1–2, 11–14 | **Response:** Heaven and earth are full of your glory

Gospel Acclamation: John 14:16

Gospel Reading: John 16:12–15

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

In the heart of Athens, Paul stands among philosophers and altars, surrounded by voices that proclaim many gods but hear no single call. He finds there an altar “to an unknown god,” and from this strange homage, he begins not with judgment, but with bridge-building. Paul sees the longing beneath their learning, the yearning beneath their idols.

It is a poignant image for our own time. We, too, live among altars—altars to technology, success, and knowledge. Consider how often we seek validation through social media, curating perfect images of our lives, or how the relentless pursuit of success can strain our relationships and leave us feeling empty. Our world prizes information, innovation, and control. Yet amid all this, a quiet thirst endures: a longing for something deeper, truer, more lasting. Like the Athenians, people still search for the divine—though they may not name it so.

Paul does not dismiss their search. He speaks into it. “What you worship as unknown, I now proclaim to you.” And what he proclaims is not a distant deity but a God who is near, who gives life and breath to all, who is not served by human hands but who calls every heart to seek Him, even if blindly, “for in Him we live and move and have our being.”

This is the paradox we hold: a God immense and intimate. A God who cannot be contained by shrines, yet who takes flesh and walks our dusty roads. A God who does not answer every question, but who shares our suffering and speaks our name.

And yes, questions remain. In a world shaped by reason and science, many ask whether faith still matters. But faith is not opposed to reason—it completes it. Science tells us how the world works; faith tells us why it matters. Reason can split atoms; faith teaches us to build peace. When a scientist marvels at the complexity of DNA, or when an artist is moved by a sunrise, both are glimpses into a reality deeper than mere fact—a place where faith and reason meet, not as rivals, but as companions in the search for truth.

Still, the harder objection remains: What about suffering? What about the burdens we bear here in Zambia—economic hardship, youth unemployment, political uncertainty, and communities still striving for equitable development? I think of organizations like the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection, where Daniel and Mark work tirelessly to advocate for economic justice and dignified living for all, echoing the Church's social teaching that every person is made in the image of God and deserves respect, opportunity, and hope.

The answer is not in escape, but in encounter. In Jesus, God does not sidestep suffering; He enters into it. He hangs between heaven and earth, bearing the weight of every injustice, every silent cry. And in the resurrection, He promises not explanations but transformation—not a solution, but a Saviour.

And here, in the midst of our searching and our questions, we encounter the Holy Spirit—our Advocate, Comforter, and Guide.

Jesus promises us in today's Gospel that the Spirit of truth will lead us into all truth, glorifying Christ and revealing God's heart to us. The Holy Spirit does not just guide the Church in grand moments of history; the Spirit guides each of us in the daily discernment of our lives—nudging us to pause before we speak, to reach out to someone in need, to choose honesty when it would be easier to hide. In moments of uncertainty, when we pray for wisdom or courage, it is the Spirit who illuminates our hearts, helping us choose what is true, good, and loving.

It is the Holy Spirit who stirs our hearts to acts of love—a sudden impulse to visit a sick friend, an urge to forgive, or the strength to stand up for the vulnerable. When you feel compassion moving you to action, or a gentle push to do what is right, recognize the Spirit at work. Every gesture of charity, every act of justice, is animated by the Spirit's quiet power within us. Each day, if we are at-

tentive, the Spirit helps us see where we are needed and what God is asking of us, whether it's a word of encouragement, a moment of silence, or a bold step toward justice.

And because Christ is risen, we do not face suffering with resignation, but with hope and with joy.

Easter is the season of joy, of new life breaking through. The Spirit pours that joy into our hearts, reminding us that even now, God is making all things new. The world's pain is real, but it is not the end of the story. We are Easter people, called to bear hope into every circumstance, trusting that the Spirit is already at work—transforming suffering into resurrection, and sorrow into joy.

And today, with Psalm 148, the Church calls all creation to praise: sun and moon, sea and wind, children and elders—all are summoned to worship. When we recognize God's handiwork in the world around us—in nature's beauty, in the dignity of each person, in every act of justice and kindness—we join this universal chorus of praise. This too is evangelization: to point out God's presence in the world, to give thanks openly, to invite others to wonder, to hope, to praise.

Evangelization, as Paul shows in Athens, is not about winning arguments but about awakening hearts. It is the invitation to encounter Christ, the one in whom “we live and move and have our being,” and to become, ourselves, witnesses to hope, especially in places of suffering and searching.

So this week, let us live like Paul: with eyes open to the searching hearts around us. Let us listen more, argue less. Let us build bridges between the known and the unknown. And let us remember that the Gospel is not a theory—it is a life, a person, a risen Lord who is not far from any one of us. This week, make a conscious effort to reach out to someone you know is struggling, offering a listening ear and a helping hand.

Let us ask ourselves:

- Where might I recognize an “altar to the unknown god” in my daily life—moments of searching, of spiritual hunger in others or myself?
- How am I being invited to witness to Christ not through argument, but through compassion and courage?

- What space can I create this week to hear the whisper of the Spirit more clearly?
- How might my praise—spoken or silent, in action or word—draw others to God’s love?

Let us pray:

Loving God, open our eyes to see the altars of our time, and grant us the courage to build bridges of compassion and understanding. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, that we may discern your will and be instruments of your peace. Let every part of creation, and each act of justice and kindness, give you praise. Renew us with Easter joy and hope. We ask this 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.