



Thursday of the 7th Week of Easter



Date: Thursday, June 5, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Acts 22:30, 23:6–11

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 16:1–2a, 5, 7–11 | **Response:** Psalm 16:1

Gospel Acclamation: John 17:21

Gospel Reading: John 17:20–26

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

Paul stands before the Sanhedrin—calm, clear, and unafraid. He doesn’t hedge his words. He doesn’t try to please both sides. He simply tells the truth: “It is because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial.”

That one sentence turns the courtroom upside down. It exposes the fault lines between the Sadducees and the Pharisees. But more than that, it reveals what Paul lives for—and what he’s willing to suffer for. The resurrection is not a theological theory to him. It is the centre of everything. The resurrection of Jesus is the reason he gets up in the morning. It’s the ground under his feet. It’s the hope that burns through prison bars and courtroom walls.

We’re still in the Easter season. Still living in the light of that empty tomb. And Paul reminds us that resurrection isn’t just something we celebrate; it’s something we live. Not only at the end of our lives, but here, now. In the way we forgive. In the way we listen. In the way we speak up when it would be easier to stay silent. Resurrection means we don’t give in to despair. It means we don’t write people off. It means we believe that what’s broken can be healed—and that the worst thing is never the last thing.

That’s exactly what Jesus is praying for in the Gospel. He’s speaking to the Father in the final hours before his Passion, and he prays for us: “That they may all be one.” Not just for unity among friends, but among enemies. Not just for agreement, but communion. And not for comfort’s sake, but for the sake of the world: “That the world may believe that you sent me.”

This kind of unity isn't soft or sentimental. It's a call to love across lines, even when it's difficult. To live in such a way that the world sees something different in us—something deeper than tribal loyalties or personal preferences. Achieving the unity Jesus prays for takes work. It requires us to confront our own biases and prejudices, to listen to those with whom we disagree, and to be willing to forgive and seek reconciliation. It takes honesty. It takes humility. And most of all, it takes grace. Because left to ourselves, we'd rather stay divided. But Jesus doesn't leave us to ourselves. He gives us his own Spirit—the Spirit that raised him from the dead—to help us do what we couldn't do alone.

The psalm gives us the confidence to try. "Keep me safe, O God; you are my refuge." That's the voice of someone who knows where their strength comes from. Not from strategy or power or popularity—but from the quiet trust that God is near, and that He will not fail us. When we work for unity, when we take the risk of reconciliation, when we stand for truth in a world that prefers compromise, we will need that trust.

And that's where today's saint meets us. Boniface, bishop and martyr, didn't serve the Gospel from a distance. He stepped into a world of chaos and division and brought the message of Christ with clarity and courage. As a missionary to Germanic lands, he faced many obstacles, including pagan practices and resistance to the Gospel. Yet, he persevered, building churches and schools, and working to reform the Church in those regions. He didn't just preach unity; he built it—with his words, with his work, and finally with his life. He died holding the Gospel. That's not just a detail of history. It's a challenge to us. In *Unam Sanctam*, it is written that the Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. This reinforces the idea of unity and the importance of the Church in achieving it.

So today, we are asked—not only what we believe, but what we're willing to live for. What kind of unity we're building. What kind of hope we're carrying. And whether the resurrection is still the beating heart of our faith, not just on paper, but in practice.

Let's take a moment, as we continue in this Easter light, to ask ourselves:

- Where is God asking me to be a bridge—to choose unity, not division—even when it costs me something?

- In the face of injustice or inequality around me, how can I let resurrection hope shape my response?
- What does it look like, in this moment of my life, to place my refuge in God—and to act from that place of trust?

May we live as witnesses to the resurrection. With the clarity of Paul, the prayer of Christ, and the courage of Boniface.

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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.