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

Monday of the 13th Week in Ordinary Time

Date: Monday, June 30, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Genesis 18:16–33
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 103:1b–4, 8–11 | **Response:** Psalm 103:8a
Gospel Acclamation: Psalm 95:8
Gospel Reading: Matthew 8:18–22
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

There is something almost audacious in Abraham's conversation with the Lord today—a quiet man standing before divine fire, daring to speak, daring to plead, daring to ask again and again: What if there are fifty? Forty? Thirty? Not for himself, but for others. Abraham becomes the advocate for a city already collapsing beneath the weight of its own wickedness of inhospitality and injustice—yet he does not pray for fire to fall, but for mercy to rise.

This is no negotiation; it is intercession born of intimacy. The Hebrew word amad—to stand—also means to take one's place. Abraham quite literally takes his place before God, bearing the weight of others. It is the heart of prophetic witness: to stand in the gap between divine justice and human brokenness—not to demand vengeance, but to plead for grace.

Here in Zimbabwe, we know the weight of cities groaning under injustice. We know what it is to queue for bread, to watch inflation devour salaries, to see children walk miles to school while others feast. And in such a place, we too must choose: will we grow cynical, or will we intercede? Will we turn inward, or will we, like Abraham, believe that even a few just souls can hold back the flood?

The psalmist offers the words to carry that hope: "The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger, rich in mercy." This is not sentiment—it is spiritual defiance. The psalm does not forget. It remembers the God who forgives our iniquity, who heals our diseases, who redeems us from the pit and crowns us with steadfast love. In a world so often shaped by fear and forgetfulness, to remember mercy is to plant our feet in a deeper truth.

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 · https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-06jun-30-yc-ot-13/

But then the Gospel shifts the ground beneath us. A scribe, caught up in the fervour, says: “I will follow you wherever you go.” And Jesus replies with a haunting honesty: “Foxes have holes, birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” Discipleship is not romantic. It is not a side project or a weekend cause. It is a letting go. Not just of comfort, but of certainty. Not just of possessions, but of expectations.

Another man asks to bury his father first—a sacred duty. But Jesus says: “Let the dead bury their dead.” Not because family doesn’t matter, but because the Kingdom cannot wait. There are moments when delay becomes disobedience. In the language of Ignatius, we might say: when the heart is stirred by deep consolation, it must not be delayed. When Christ calls, the answer must be now.

This Gospel does not come to scold, but to awaken. It calls us to a discipleship that costs something: the security of our routines, the comfort of our roles, the safety of saying “later.” But what we receive is infinitely more. To follow Christ is to find a freedom the world cannot give and will never understand.

Today, we remember the First Holy Martyrs of Rome—faithful ones whose courage cast light into the empire’s darkest hour. They were unnamed in Caesar’s chronicles, but eternal in the heart of the Church. Their blood watered the roots of our faith. They answered Christ’s call without hesitation, and by their witness, they still speak: that mercy is mightier than vengeance, that love is stronger than fear, and that the cross is not the end, but the way to eternal life.

Let us brings these questions into our prayer today:

- Where am I being called to stand in the breach—for someone, for a community, for a cause others have given up on?
- What comfort, convenience, or cultural voice is keeping me from a freer, deeper “yes” to Jesus today?
- Do I truly believe the Kingdom of God matters more than anything else—and if not, what must I surrender to begin living as if it does?

Let us walk on—not hurriedly, but faithfully—with eyes on the One who calls, and hearts ready to follow, even into the unknown. May His mercy be our shelter, and His voice our compass.

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 · https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-06jun-30-yc-ot-13/

Lord, help us to embrace the cost of discipleship, to trust in your unfailing mercy, and to respond to your call with courage and love. Amen.

Source: https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-06jun-30-yc-ot-13/

This homily is shared for personal and pastoral use. Please attribute the author and do not alter the meaning when quoting. If you wish this homily to be translated - there is an option on the website which will allow you to translate it into the language of your choice.

Licenced under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) license.

The author does not speak for the Society of Jesus or for the Catholic Church.

Receive Fr Matthew Charlesworth's Homilies on **WhatsApp**

Receive Fr Matthew Charlesworth's Homilies on **Telegram**

Receive Fr Matthew Charlesworth's Homilies on **Signal**

Scan for Website on **Clearnet**

Scan for Onion Mirror **via TOR**

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.