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Tuesday of the 13th Week in Ordinary Time

Date: Tuesday, July 1, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Genesis 19:15–29
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 26:2–3, 9–12 | **Response:** Psalm 26:3a
Gospel Acclamation: Psalm 130:5
Gospel Reading: Matthew 8:23–27
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

Sometimes, life takes unexpected turns. Not suddenly with commotion. But quietly. Slowly. Like a mud hut crumbling after heavy rain. Plans eventually fall through. Strength gradually runs out. Even our prayers feel weak—like whispers lost in the wind.

In those moments, what do we reach for? Not easy answers. Not perfect solutions. But presence. A God who stays. A God who understands our emptiness. A God who reaches for us with mercy, even when we hesitate.

Today's readings show us this mercy—not just as an idea, but as something real. A hand to hold. A voice to trust. A gentle, firm grasp of love.

We begin with Lot. He lives in a city falling apart—Sodom. He's told to flee. To run. But he waits. He's unsure. He hesitates. Is he saved because he's brave? No. He's saved because God grabs his hand. The Hebrew word is chazaq—to seize. It means a strong, gentle pull. God doesn't wait for Lot to be perfect. He takes his hand and leads him.

But Lot's wife looks back. Just once. But it stops everything. In Jewish tradition, her glance isn't just curiosity—it's a refusal to let go. She wants to go back. She becomes stuck. Frozen. A pillar of salt. A picture of regret.

That may sound like a story from long ago. But here in Zimbabwe, don't we sometimes feel the same? The nation is tired. Corruption, poverty, broken promises—these wear us down. The dream of a better Zimbabwe—a land of fairness and peace—can feel far away. And sometimes, it's easier to settle for what's broken than to take the risk of something new.

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But God calls us forward. Not into comfort, but into freedom. And God's mercy still reaches for us, even here. Even now. The road ahead may be hard. But it is real. And it is the path God sets before us still.

The psalm today is a brave prayer: "Test me, Lord… try me." It's not a prayer for an easy life. It's a prayer for truth. For clean hands. A steady heart. A clear path. That's what we need—not louder voices, but honest hearts. Not perfection, but sincerity. A heart ready to be led by mercy.

In the Gospel, the storm comes. The boat is rocking. The wind is wild. Water is pouring in. And Jesus is asleep. The disciples cry out, "We are perishing!" But Jesus doesn't calm the storm right away. First, He speaks to their fear. "Why are you afraid?" Not to shame them. But to help them remember: He is with them.

Let's pause to picture that boat. Feel the waves. Taste the salt. Hear the wind. And then—see Him. Jesus. Still. Calm. Resting. And one of the disciples notices —not with fear, but with peace: He is here. The storm is still there. But now they know—they're not alone. The grip of God's love is stronger than the fearful pull of the waves.

We often forget this. When life is hard. When news brings only bad stories. When prayer feels like silence. But even then—especially then—He is in the boat. He is in the storm. He is with us. Always.

St Ignatius teaches us to pray with our imagination. To step into the Gospel story. To notice where Jesus is. Not to fix the storm. Just to stay close to Him. To trust in His mercy.

Today we remember Saints Aaron and Esther—two people who showed courage in quiet ways. Aaron, the priest, ran into a crowd dying from plague. He carried incense and prayed—standing between life and death. He brought hope where there was only fear.

Esther was a queen. But she had no army. She prayed. She fasted. Then she spoke. Her words saved her people. She believed God was already at work, even in the darkness. Like Aaron, she showed what it means to be held—and to hold others—in God's loving embrace.

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The lesson from the readings this morning is that God doesn't always stop the storm. But He always joins us in the boat. He doesn't always take away our fears immediately. But He always gives us Himself. And that is enough.

Let us take these questions into our prayer this morning:

- Is there something I need to leave behind—not because it's bad, but because it no longer helps me live fully? What part of my past am I still holding on to?
- Where is fear speaking louder than faith? How can I begin again to listen for Jesus' voice in the storm?
- What would it mean to let myself be led—even if I don't feel brave? Can I trust that God is already working, even when I can't see it?

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, You who sleep through storms and speak peace into fear—take our hand. Lead us forward. Help us let go of what holds us back. Calm the winds in our hearts. Slow our racing thoughts. Like Aaron, help us bring mercy into hurting places. Like Esther, give us the courage to speak when silence feels safer. And when we forget You're near, remind us: You are in the boat. You are in the storm. And You are holding us with mercy. 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.