



## Wednesday of the 13th Week in Ordinary Time



**Date:** Wednesday, July 2, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

**First Reading:** Genesis 21:5, 8–20a

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 34:7–8, 10–13 | **Response:** Psalm 34:7a

**Gospel Acclamation:** James 1:18

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 8:28–34

**Preached at:** the Chapel of Emmaus House in the Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe.

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**T**oday's readings are about being cast out—and being heard by God.

Hagar is sent into the desert with her son, Ishmael. She has no shelter, no water, no future. When the water runs out, she places her child under a bush and walks away. She cannot bear to watch him die. She does not ask for a miracle—only the strength to look away.

But God hears. God sees. God acts.

The word used in Hebrew—*shama'*—means more than hearing. It means to notice, to care, to respond. “God heard the boy crying,” and in that moment, something changes. A well appears—perhaps it had always been there, but now Hagar sees it. She sees hope where she had only seen death.

Psalm 34 continues this message: “The angel of the Lord camps around those who fear him.” Not far off. Not watching from a distance. But close. Beside those in pain. This is who God is. A God who stays near.

In the Gospel, Jesus meets two men living among the tombs—cut off from their families, full of torment. Others had chained them, feared them, left them. But Jesus walks toward them. He speaks. And they are freed. Jesus steps into the place no one else will go. He does not look away.

But then the townspeople begged him to leave. Not because of what he did wrong—but because of what he changed. Healing disturbs what we've learned to live with. Sometimes we choose familiar suffering over unfamiliar mercy. Why? Because change is scary. It requires us to step outside our comfort zones and

confront our fears. The townspeople may have been afraid of losing their economic stability after the loss of their swine. They may have been resistant to the disruption of their social order. We may cling to our suffering because it's what we know, even if it's not what's best for us. But God calls us to embrace the unfamiliar mercy, to trust that He will lead us to a better place, even if it's a place we've never been before.

In Zimbabwe today, Hagar still walks. Mothers still carry children through dry land. Families are still pushed from their homes. People still live in the forgotten places—clinics, prisons, the side of the road.

But God still hears. Jesus still comes close. And the well still waits to be seen.

And today, the Church gives us companions in this mission—Jesuit priests who chose to go to the forgotten places. Bernardine Realino walked with the poor in Naples, John Francis Regis served the outcasts of rural France, Francis Jerome preached among the sick and the ignored. Blessed Julian Maunoir, Anthony Balducci, Tiburcio Arnaiz, and Johann Philipp Jeningen each stepped into the spiritual tombs of their day: remote villages, broken towns, neglected hearts. They did not fear the wilderness or the cost of healing. They stayed close, as God stays close. They listened, walked, and loved until the well was found.

St Ignatius would ask us to enter these stories in prayer. Feel the heat on your back. Hear the child's cry. Can we pretend to be Hagar? Can you see the water?

Stand in the Gospel scene. Watch the man come from the tombs. Could it be someone you know? Could it be you? And when Jesus draws near—what does he say?

So today, let us pray with these questions:

- Where in my life have I felt forgotten—and might God be showing me water in the desert?
- Who in my life have I avoided or feared—and how is Jesus asking me to draw near?
- Where am I afraid of change—and can I let Jesus come close anyway?

As we reflect on these questions, let us also remember the Eucharist, the source and summit of our Christian life. In the Eucharist, we encounter the real presence of Jesus, who draws near to us in our suffering and offers us the grace to embrace change. Just as the well appeared to Hagar in the desert, the Eucharist is a wellspring of spiritual nourishment that sustains us on our journey.

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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.