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Tuesday of the 14th Week in Ordinary Time

Date: Tuesday, July 8, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Genesis 32:23–33
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 17:1b, 2–3, 6–7b, 8b, 15 | **Response:** Psalm 17:15a
Gospel Acclamation: John 10:14
Gospel Reading: Matthew 9:32–38
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

The readings this morning are about struggle, silence, and being sent. They show us that God often works not when life is easy or clear, but when we are weary, unsure, and in the dark. When we don't have the answers, but still hold on.

Jacob, in the first reading, is in that place of darkness. He is returning to face his brother Esau, whom he wronged years before. He stands by the Jabbok River, alone and afraid. And there, someone wrestles with him through the night. In Jewish tradition, some say it was an angel, some say God, others believe Jacob was wrestling with his own past. But Jacob refuses to let go. He demands a blessing, and he receives one. He is given a new name: Israel—the one who wrestled with God and lived.

But he limps away from the fight. He's wounded. That limp isn't a sign of defeat. It's a sign that something changed. He met God in the struggle and came through—not untouched, but transformed. His limp becomes a testimony: a mark of someone who stayed in the fight and trusted that God could still bless, even in pain.

Many around us carry invisible limps—and others, very visible ones. Here in Zimbabwe, many shoulder burdens they never chose: school fees, joblessness, illness, the quiet despair of broken promises. But today's reading gives us hope. Not cheap hope, but the theological virtue of hope—one of the three at the heart of Christian life, along with faith and love. Pope Francis reminded us that suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope. Hope isn't naïve. It's the grace that helps us keep going when everything says we shouldn't. It's what lets us hold on, even when the way is not clear.

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The psalm today picks up that cry. “I call,” the psalmist says, “and you will hear me.” This is not someone shouting into a void. This is someone who believes that even in the night, God listens. And more than that—God responds. And here’s something we often forget: prayer isn’t just us speaking. It’s also how we listen. Pope Benedict said prayer means growing in intimacy with God. It helps us hear His voice—through Scripture, through our conscience, through the quiet of the day. So when we cry out, we must also ask: what is God saying in return?

Then in the Gospel, we meet someone whose suffering has taken away his voice. He is mute, possessed, cut off from others. Jesus heals him. He restores not only his speech but his dignity. The man can speak again. He can belong again. This is what Jesus does—He restores what is broken. And He doesn’t stop with that one man. He looks out at the crowds—tired, lost, without direction—and feels something deep in His gut: compassion. Not pity, but that strong, tender mercy that moves a person to act.

He turns to His disciples and says, “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few.” And He asks them to pray—to ask the Lord to send people out into that harvest. That invitation still stands. Christ isn’t looking for perfect people. He calls those who are willing. People who offer what they have, where they are. Like Saints Priscilla and Aquila, whom we remember today—ordinary people who opened their home, taught others, supported Paul, and lived faith, hope, and love in action.

Today, we say some hellos and some goodbyes. We bid farewell to David as he heads to Ireland for a well-earned rest—may your travels be safe and your rest refreshing. And we thank Martin for his ten weeks in Zimbabwe, and for these past days with us. Your presence has been a gift. As you return to Germany to take your vows, know that you go with our prayers. And we welcome Maxwell to the community—may this be a place of peace and growth for you as you begin your work with JesCom and prepare for your philosophy studies.

We know that Ignatian spirituality invites us to enter the Scriptures with our whole selves. So imagine: you are in that crowd. You’ve heard the stories. You’ve walked far. You are tired, maybe silent in your own way. Then Jesus sees you—not with judgement, but with love. What does He say?

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Or perhaps, like Jacob, you're at your own river's edge. You are wrestling—with a past decision, with grief, with something unnamed. And in that struggle, you hear the words spoken to Jacob: "You have wrestled with God and with men, and have prevailed"—not because you fought against God, but because you would not let go. Because you trusted Him through the night.

These readings don't offer quick fixes. But they offer something better: the truth that God meets us in the dark, listens when we cry out, and calls us—wounded as we are—to be part of His healing work. This is the heart of our faith—not only words, but love in action. To say to the hurting, "You are not alone." To the silenced, "Your voice matters." To the weary, "Let me walk with you."

Let us take these questions into our prayer this morning:

- Where am I wrestling with God—and what blessing might be hidden in that struggle?
- Whose silence is God asking me to notice—and how can I be a voice of hope or healing?
- How is God calling me to labour in His harvest today?

May we walk with hope, even if we limp. May we listen with open hearts. And may we say yes—not perfectly, but fully—to wherever Christ sends us. 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.