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Memorial of Saint Benedict, Abbot

Date: Friday, July 11, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Genesis 46:1–7, 28–30
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 37:3–4, 18–19, 27–28, 39–40 | **Response:** Psalm 37:39a
Gospel Acclamation: John 16:13a, 14:26d
Gospel Reading: Matthew 10:16–23
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

My dear brothers,

As men who pray, we know that silence is often where God speaks. It is also where trust begins to take root. Today's readings—Jacob journeying to Egypt, the Psalm's quiet hope, and Jesus sending out the apostles—draw us into one invitation: to trust God when the path ahead is unclear. On this feast of Saint Benedict, we remember that such trust does not grow through dramatic gestures, but through silence, steady prayer, and daily faithfulness.

Jacob is old. He's lost Rachel. He thought Joseph was gone. Now God asks him to leave home again. Egypt is a place of past pain and future risk. Yet God says, "Do not be afraid. I will go with you." He makes no promise of ease—only presence. And that is enough to turn fear into faith.

We know what it means to face uncertainty. In Zimbabwe today, young people finish school with no work waiting. Families plant into dry soil. Teachers and nurses serve without proper support. As religious, we too face unknowns—in our ministries, in our vocations, and in our communities. Yet the promise holds: God goes with us. This is where discernment begins—not by avoiding difficulty, but by asking: Where is God in this Egypt?

The Psalm says, "The Lord is our stronghold in time of distress." It doesn't promise comfort. It promises companionship. This is the quiet confidence that comes from deep prayer, from the Spiritual Exercises, from the daily examen—where we trace God's presence through both desolation and consolation. It is the trust of farmers who still plant, teachers who still teach, elders who still pray—even when hope feels thin.

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Saint Benedict lived this kind of trust. He left a world in turmoil—not to escape, but to seek God more freely. In the silence of a cave, he formed a vision of life grounded in prayer, rhythm, and community. From that silence came the Rule of Saint Benedict—a brief but wise guide to humility, stability, and obedience. Through *ora et labora*, prayer and work, he built monasteries that became gardens of peace and centres of renewal. Small, faithful acts, rooted in God, changed the world. That Rule still speaks to us: not to build empires, but to build inner stillness, outward order, and hearts open to Christ.

We, too, are called to be places of peace. In our homes, schools, and parishes, others should find prayer and service, depth and hope woven together. This is our *actio*, the fruit of our *lectio divina*—the movement of grace that turns reflection into love.

In the Gospel, Jesus sends the apostles out like sheep among wolves. No protection. No power. Just a warning—and a mission. "Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." He calls them to discernment: pure hearts, alert minds. Not to conquer, but to witness. This is not only for the first twelve. It is for us. To go where we are sent. To speak with mercy. To serve with courage.

In our daily lives, the *Magis* might look like this: choosing integrity over advantage, staying faithful when consolation fades, telling the truth with charity, remaining rooted in community, and bearing trials with inner freedom. These are the fruits of discernment—the quieter yes, the deeper fidelity—that flow from hearts shaped by the Spiritual Exercises.

And all of this depends on trust. Not blind optimism. Not passive resignation. But the quiet strength that knows God is with us—working even when we cannot see it. Even in Egypt.

So let us live as if we believe that. Like Jacob, let us go forward, even without clarity, trusting in God's presence. Like Benedict, let us build a monastery within—through prayer, simplicity, and order. Like the apostles, let us serve with courage, discerning the spirits and choosing what is of God.

As we go forth from this Eucharist, I invite you to carry these questions into your prayer—or into your daily examen:

- Where is God inviting me to deeper trust in this season?

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- Who is He sending me to serve—and how can I respond with greater love?
- What fear or attachment is holding me back from greater freedom in Christ?

May the Lord go with you into your Egypt. May He build within you a quiet monastery of peace. And may you know—always—that His presence is more than enough.

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.