



Monday of the 15th Week in Ordinary Time



Date: Monday, July 14, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Exodus 1:8–14, 22

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 124:1b–8 | **Response:** Psalm 124:8a

Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 5:10

Gospel Reading: Matthew 10:34–11

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

Fire can do many things. It can destroy, but it can also clean and purify. When Moses sees the burning bush, he sees a fire that burns but does not destroy. This is the kind of fire Jesus came to bring—not a fire of violence, but a fire of truth. It doesn't burn what's on the outside. It burns away lies so that something real and good can grow.

We see that purifying fire in today's readings.

In Egypt, a new Pharaoh rises. He does not remember Joseph. He sees the Israelites not as people, but as a problem. He turns them from guests into slaves. He fears their strength and tries to crush it. He even orders that every baby boy be thrown into the Nile. This is more than just a story from long ago. It's what every tyrant does. They use fear as policy. They turn people into enemies. They try to control by killing hope.

And still the Nile runs red. Even here, in our own country, young lives are slowly drowned—not in water, but in systems that don't care. When children can't go to school because they are poor, when girls are pushed into early marriage, when corruption keeps the doors of opportunity locked—then Pharaoh is still at work in Zimbabwe.

But God is not silent. The Psalmist says, "If the Lord had not been on our side..." The people would have been crushed. But they were not. The snare was broken. The bird escaped. This is the song of survivors—of mothers who carry on, of young people who hold on to their dignity even in hard times. It is not power that saves. It is grace. It is not strength that frees us. It is mercy.

Then Jesus says something hard: “Do not think I have come to bring peace, but a sword.” These are not easy words. But they are honest. The sword He brings is not a weapon. It is truth. It cuts through lies. It shows us what is real. It does not hurt to destroy. It cuts to heal, to prune. It frees us from false peace, from the kind of comfort that hides injustice.

To carry this sword means making hard choices. It means speaking up when silence feels safer. It means forgiving—not because we forget, but because we want to be free. I think of the couple in London whose teenage son was killed in a knife attack. They stood in court and forgave the boy who had taken their child’s life. “We chose to forgive,” they said, “because we didn’t want to live with hate.” That is real forgiveness. It hurts—but it heals. It does not change the past, but it opens the future.

Telling the truth in love is not about shouting or winning. It is about speaking with humility. It is about loving even those who have hurt us. Love without truth is empty. Truth without love is cruel. But when we bring them together, they become strong and good.

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha understood this fire. When she became a Christian, she lost her family, her home, her safety. People laughed at her. She was treated badly. But she did not hate. She forgave. She left—not out of fear, but because she was faithful. In the quiet woods of Canada, she became a light. She prayed. She fasted. She lived simply. Her holiness was not loud, but it shone.

Christ’s fire changed her. It can change us too. We receive that fire every time we receive the Eucharist. In it we find His presence—and also His courage, His clarity, His compassion.

So what should we do?

Start small. Speak the truth—but not to shame anyone. Speak it to set them free. Choose what is right, even if it’s hard. Show mercy, even when it costs. Fix a broken friendship. Say no to a bribe. Tell the truth when it would be easier to lie. Tonight, when you pray the Examen, ask yourself: When was I brave today? When did I let love and truth shine through me?

We don't carry this alone. We carry it together—with each other, with the Church, with Christ. His fire won't always make things easy—but it will keep us true. The road may stretch long—but it does not lead nowhere. This is not comfort without cost. It is peace that holds fast.

So let the fire burn. Let it burn away fear, anger, and false peace. Let it burn until only love remains.

Now, let us carry these questions with us this week:

- Where in my life do I need to speak the truth—not to hurt, but to heal?
- Who or what is the “Pharaoh” I must stand up to—and how can I do it with grace?
- Where have I seen God’s fire in my life—and how can I carry that fire to others?

Amen.

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-07jul-14-yc-ot-15/>

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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.