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Tuesday of the 15th Week in Ordinary Time

Date: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Exodus 2:1–15a
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 69:3, 14, 30–31, 33–34 | **Response:** Psalm 69:33
Gospel Acclamation: Psalm 95:8
Gospel Reading: Matthew 11:20–24
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today's readings invite us to reflect on how we respond—to danger, to suffering, to God's presence and His grace. The readings we just heard speak to a moment of crisis, a moment of choice, and the quiet workings of God amidst it all.

In the first reading from Exodus, we meet the infant Moses at a time when Pharaoh has ordered that every Hebrew boy be thrown into the Nile. Moses' mother complies—technically—but with great courage and care. She places him in a basket among the reeds, and watches from a distance. What looks like abandonment is in fact an act of deep faith and maternal resistance. Pharaoh's daughter finds him, and through a series of what we might call coincidences—but what Scripture calls providence—Moses is saved, and even nursed by his own mother.

His name, Moses, may come from the Egyptian root meaning "to be born," common in names like Ra-moses or Tuth-moses. But for the Hebrew people, it becomes a word of deliverance—"drawn out" from the water. And so the one who will later draw the people out of slavery is himself drawn out of danger.

This story mirrors others from the ancient world—like the Akkadian tale of King Sargon—and yet for us Christians, it prefigures something more: the story of Jesus. Like Moses, Jesus narrowly escapes death as an infant. Like Moses, he is later exiled. And like Moses, he is called to lead—not with weapons, but with a word; not with fear, but with freedom.

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We turn next to Psalm 69, which begins with a voice crying out from deep distress: “I am weary with crying… my throat is parched.” This is not just a lament. It is the honest voice of someone pushed to the limits. Yet even here, the psalmist holds on to one line of faith: “The Lord hears the needy.” Not just their words. God hears their cry. Their pain. Their exhaustion.

In our context—in Zimbabwe today—this is not a distant idea. We know what it means to cry out, to be tired of waiting, to feel forgotten by those in power. But this psalm reminds us that no cry of the poor is lost on God. He does not turn away. He listens. And He acts, even if slowly, even if through hidden means.

Finally, in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus speaks words of sorrow, not to strangers, but to those who knew him best. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and especially Capernaum—these were towns where he taught, healed, and worked wonders. And yet, they remained unchanged. “If the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon,” he says, “they would have repented long ago.”

This is a painful statement. These were religious towns. Familiar with the Scriptures. Close to holiness. And that, perhaps, was the problem. Familiarity can become a kind of insulation. The more they saw, the less they noticed. The more grace they received, the less they responded.

And here we must pause to consider what grace truly is. Grace is not just a gentle feeling or a spiritual boost. It is the freely given, unearned help of God that enables us to become what we were created to be. It is God’s initiative, God’s love moving toward us when we least deserve it. But grace always calls for a response. We are free to resist it. And Jesus grieves, not because these towns rejected him violently, but because they refused to change.

This Gospel is a mirror. It asks us: where have we grown used to God? Where have we become so close to the holy that we’ve stopped letting it move us?

Saint Bonaventure, who we remember today, helps us here. He reminds us that knowledge of God is not enough—it must become love. He once wrote, “Ask grace, not instruction; desire, not understanding.”[1] Bonaventure knew that grace is not simply received passively—it must be welcomed actively. It leads us to conversion, to deeper desire, to action.

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And so today, we might find ourselves somewhere in this story. Are we like Moses' mother—trying to protect life amid danger, doing what we can even when the odds seem overwhelming? Are we like the psalmist—exhausted, but still trusting that God hears? Or are we perhaps like those towns—close to the things of God, but slow to change?

As we prepare to receive Christ in the Eucharist, the very source and summit of grace, let us remember: here, in this sacrament, we are offered the same grace those towns received, but in its fullest measure. Christ is truly present, offering Himself entirely. The question is—how will we respond to this ultimate gift?

And so I leave you with these questions to take into our prayer today:

- Where have I become too familiar with God's presence—seen grace, but stayed the same?
- Am I allowing the cries of the poor and suffering around me to shape my prayer and action?
- What step can I take—today—to respond more fully to grace, to let it change not just how I think, but how I live?

Amen.

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1. *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, Chapter VII, §4; English translation from *Saint Bonaventure: The Soul's Journey into God, The Tree of Life, and The Life of St. Francis*, translated by Ewert Cousins (The Classics of Western Spirituality series, Paulist Press, 1978). ↩

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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.

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