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A homily for the Tuesday of the 20th Week in Ordinary Time

Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Judges 6:11–24a

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 85:9, 11–14 | **Response:** Psalm 85:9b

Gospel Acclamation: 2 Corinthians 8:9

Gospel Reading: Matthew 19:23–30

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

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

When the angel greets Gideon in the Book of Judges, he says: “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.” But Gideon doesn’t feel mighty. He’s hiding from his enemies, threshing wheat in secret. His people are suffering. His heart is full of fear.

So Gideon says what many of us have felt: “If the Lord is with us, why has all this happened?”

That’s a question we know in Zimbabwe. If God is near, why is there so much hardship? Why the hunger, the corruption, the injustice, the grief? We look around and see struggle, and like Gideon, we want to understand.

But God doesn’t give him explanations. He gives him a mission. “Go in the strength you have. Am I not sending you?”

And then Gideon does something remarkable. He builds an altar and names it, “The Lord is peace.” In the midst of fear, surrounded by enemies, he makes a concrete act of faith, trusting that God’s presence is itself peace. It is a sign that

God is not far away, but already at work, already making the impossible possible.

God does not wait for Gideon to feel brave. He promises to be with him. And that makes all the difference. This is how grace works. It does not take away our freedom—it sets it free. God moves first. He invites. And by grace, we are able to respond.

This theme carries into the Gospel today. A rich young man has just walked away, unable to let go of what he owns. Jesus turns to His disciples and says, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.”

The disciples are shocked. They had believed wealth was a sign of blessing. “Then who can be saved?” they ask.

Jesus replies, “For human beings, it is impossible. But for God, all things are possible.” And how does God make it possible? Through His grace. Grace that softens hardened hearts. Grace that loosens our grip on what we cling to. Grace that enables us to follow when our strength alone would fail. It is not about human effort alone, but God’s empowering love that transforms us.

Peter, still trying to understand, says: “We have left everything to follow you—what about us?” And Jesus answers with kindness and promise: “You will receive a hundredfold... and inherit eternal life.” Then He adds, with that touch of divine surprise: “But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.” The Kingdom upends our human hierarchies. It humbles the proud and raises the lowly. It reminds us that greatness is found in service, not status.

The Psalm today gives us a beautiful picture: “Justice and peace shall kiss; truth shall spring from the earth.” That is the dream of God for the world—a place of healing, reconciliation, and joy. And we are invited to help make it real.

We do see signs of it already—in faithful teachers, in generous families, in young people choosing what is right over what is easy, in communities that keep praying and serving despite difficulties. These are the seeds of the Kingdom.

But they are not ours to grow by willpower alone. The Kingdom grows by grace, especially through the sacraments. In Baptism, we are made new. In Confession, we are restored. In the Eucharist, we receive Christ Himself. These are not just holy moments—they are powerful actions of God. They strengthen us, change us, and keep us close to Him.

Saint John Eudes, whom we remember today, lived this calling with boldness and compassion. He trained priests, served the poor, and helped people see the love of Jesus, especially through devotion to the Sacred Heart. Like Gideon, he built altars of faith in a broken world—places where people could encounter God’s peace, mercy, and strength. He trusted deeply in the power of the Church, the sacraments, and God’s grace to renew lives and communities.

Saint Ignatius, in the Spiritual Exercises, invites us to imagine ourselves in the Gospel stories. So let us imagine:

You are Gideon. You are afraid. And God calls you “mighty.” What do you feel?

Now imagine you are Peter. You’ve left much to follow Jesus. And He promises far more. Do you believe Him?

These are not just old stories. They are God’s Word to us—now.

God is still calling. The Kingdom is still coming. And grace is still being poured out.

So when you hear His voice—“Go in the strength you have. Am I not sending you?”—how will you respond?

Let us take these questions into your prayer today:

- Where is God calling me to act, even when I feel unsure or weak?
- How is grace helping me say yes—not out of fear, but out of love?
- How can I help build the Kingdom—through one act of mercy, justice, or service this week?

And may the Eucharist we share today give us strength — not our own strength,
but His.

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