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Friday of the 23rd Week in Ordinary Time

Date: Friday, September 12, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: 1 Timothy 1:1–2, 12–14
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 16:1b–2a, 5, 7–8, 11 | **Response:** Psalm 16:5a
Gospel Acclamation: John 17:17ab
Gospel Reading: Luke 6:39–42
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

The eyes of Christ do not merely look—they illumine. And today, the readings invite us to see with His eyes, so we do not lead others into confusion or shadows, but into clarity, compassion, and truth.

In our first reading, Paul speaks like a man who has seen himself honestly in the mirror of God's mercy. "I was once a blasphemer, a persecutor, a man of violence," he says. Not long ago, Paul had believed himself righteous. He thought he was serving God, even as he dragged Christians from their homes. But when the risen Christ found him on the road, Paul's eyes were opened—not just physically, but spiritually. The scales fell not just from his sight but from his soul.

And he tells this story not to dwell in shame, nor to centre himself in the drama. He tells it to glorify the outrageous patience of God. Christ saw something in Paul even Paul could not see—something redeemable, something lovable, something that could bear the Gospel itself. Grace does not only forgive. It transforms. Paul is astonished that such mercy was given to him. And we should be just as astonished that it is offered to us.

The Psalm today is a quieter vision. Psalm 16 is not a cry of distress but a song of resting confidence: "You, Lord, are my portion and my cup." The psalmist doesn't claim clarity of understanding, nor control over the future. He simply knows who holds him. He knows that even in the night, even in the uncertainties and unspoken questions, God is near. That nearness—more than answers, more than security—is what gives peace.

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In the Gospel, Jesus speaks with disarming precision. “Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit?”. It’s a parable of vision—but not optical vision. This is about spiritual clarity. About how easy it is to become blind to our own faults while scrutinising the flaws of others. “Why do you see the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the plank in your own?”

There’s humour in it, yes—a bit of holy exaggeration—but there’s also deep moral seriousness. Jesus isn’t condemning discernment. He’s teaching us humility. Before we presume to guide others, we must let ourselves be trained, formed, corrected. In Jesus’ time, a rabbi’s student didn’t simply learn information; he watched how the teacher lived. And Jesus is not just any rabbi—He is wisdom itself. We do not surpass the Teacher. At best, we become like Him. And only when His light shines in us can we help others find their way.

In our context here in Zimbabwe, these words are not abstract. When economies collapse and truth is hard to find, people will follow whichever voice sounds loudest or most certain. But not every voice leads to life. False clarity is still blindness. And so, we need leaders—and followers—who are learning to see through the lens of love. Who know they don’t have the full picture. Who move forward with humility and compassion. Our Catholic tradition reminds us: dignity is not a reward for success or strength. It is the starting point of every human story. To see that clearly is to begin to see with Christ’s eyes.

St Paul was once blind in his zeal; the psalmist shows us the clarity that comes from trust; and Jesus invites us to become students of His way, not just critics of our neighbours. The thread that ties them together is the gift of wisdom—not cleverness, not opinions, not the power to persuade. But wisdom, which sees as God sees. And wisdom begins when we confess that we are not as wise as we think.

St Ignatius of Loyola, who knew much about the blindness that ambition can bring, would ask us to enter this Gospel scene. To imagine Jesus saying these words. Can you see His face? Perhaps there’s a smile playing at His lips—not mocking, but knowing. He sees the ridiculousness of our moral double standards, but He still looks at us with love. He wants us to see. Not just facts. But people. Their stories. Their struggles. The whole truth—not the half-truth that flatters us.

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So perhaps in the examen, that daily mirror of the soul, we can ask: Where was I blind today? Where did I speak too quickly? Who did I fail to notice—really notice? The examen is not just about correcting faults; it's about clearing the eyes of the heart so we can love better tomorrow.

Today is the feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary. Her name is not magic. It is memory. It is trust. Mary's whole life was a vision of faith. She saw God's promise even when it came in the form of a whisper, a womb, a wooden cross. In a world where power dazzles and noise dominates, she shows us what it means to see clearly. To see the hand of God in what the world considers small. When we say her name in prayer, we are asking: Help me see like you. Help me trust when I don't understand. Help me walk in the dark with hope.

So, let's not settle for blurred vision. Let us ask for the grace to see truly—to see our own hearts with honesty, our neighbours with mercy, and the world with the eyes of Christ. Because every act of justice, every defence of the dignity of another, every time we choose patience over pride—that is clear sight. That is light in a dark world.

And if we see rightly, we just might guide rightly. Not as experts. Not as the unerring. But as disciples walking together toward the light.

For our prayer today:

– Where am I being invited to remove the "plank" from my eye—especially in how I judge or speak of others?

– How can I learn to see others—especially those who are poor, excluded, or difficult—with the eyes of mercy and humility?

– Like Mary, can I trust God's voice and promise, even when the road ahead looks unclear or hidden?

Lord Jesus, you opened the eyes of Paul and taught us to remove the log from our own sight. Grant us the humility to examine our hearts, the grace to heal our blindness, and the courage to lead others to your light. Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, may we always see you more clearly. 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.