



Monday of the 25th Week in Ordinary Time



Date: Monday, September 22, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Ezra 1:1–6

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 126:1b–6 | **Response:** Psalm 126:3

Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 5:16

Gospel Reading: Luke 8:16–18

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

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,
The readings today are about rebuilding: God restores a people, God renews their hope, and God calls them to let the light of faith shine where all can see.

In the Book of Ezra we hear that “the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia.” Cyrus was not an Israelite, not a prophet, not even a believer in the God of Israel. Yet the Spirit moved him to set the captives free and to command the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. The lesson is clear: God works in surprising ways and through surprising people. He stirs the hearts of rulers and neighbours, pagans and prophets alike. He can use anyone, even those outside our circle of faith, to advance His plan of salvation.

The neighbours of the exiles gave silver and gold, oxen and goods to help them on their way. This is another reminder: rebuilding is never the task of one person alone. It takes generosity, solidarity, and the willingness to share. Here in Zimbabwe, we know this truth. Families survive hardship not by isolation but by helping each other—sharing seed, sharing transport, sharing hope. Like the exiles, we depend on the kindness of neighbours to make a new beginning possible.

Psalm 126 sings the joy of those who returned: “When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.” The return felt too good to be true. Yet the Psalm also remembers the tears that were sown before the harvest. “Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy.” Brothers and sisters, this

is a promise for us too. In our country, where so many sow their fields with worry about the rains, where parents send their children to school with heavy hearts, where nurses and teachers labour with little pay but much love—these are the tears that God will turn into joy. The Psalm assures us: our weeping is not wasted. It is the seedbed of God’s harvest.

The Gospel of Luke gathers these voices into one clear call. “No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a bowl.” The light of faith is not for hiding. It is for shining. It is for guiding. It is for welcoming. The lamp in ancient homes was small but steady. Set on a stand, it was enough to light the room and to help the family see one another’s faces. So too with our faith. It does not need to be loud or grand. It needs to be visible. It needs to be shared.

Jesus adds, “For to the one who has, more will be given.” This is the way of grace. The more we use the gifts of faith, the more we find them deepened. Like eyesight adjusting in the dark, the more we look for God’s presence, the more we see Him—in our studies, in our work, in our struggles, in our joys.

How do we live this today? First, by trusting that God is still stirring hearts—even the hearts of those we least expect. Second, by sowing with tears yet believing that God will bring the harvest. And third, by placing our lamp on the stand, by letting the light of Christ shine in our families, our communities, our nation.

At this altar we are invited to do exactly that. The Word we have heard now becomes the Word made Flesh, given to us in the Eucharist. We are not just listeners to the light but bearers of the light. We carry Christ Himself into the world.

So let us ask, as Ignatius would:

- What part of my life feels like exile, and is God calling me to rebuild it with His help?
- Where am I hiding the lamp of faith, and what would it mean to let it shine this week?
- Whom can I help with a gift, a word, or a gesture, so that they too may rebuild their hope?

May the Lord who stirred Cyrus stir our own hearts, may He turn our tears into joy, and may His light shine in us and through us, for the good of His people and the glory of His name.

Amen.

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-09sep-22-yc-ot-25/>

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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.