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Memorial of St Francis Borgia, priest

Date: Friday, October 3, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Baruch 1:15–22
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 79:1b–5, 8–9 | **Response:** Psalm 79:9
Gospel Acclamation: Psalm 95:8
Gospel Reading: Luke 10:13–16
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

The readings today are about the door of the heart: how pride closes it, how repentance opens it, and how God waits outside with mercy.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Our first reading from Baruch gives us a people who finally turn the key from the inside. They confess without excuse. They name their disobedience, their deafness to the Law, their idolatry. Exile has taught them what comfort could not. This is the first movement of conversion in the Spiritual Exercises: honest naming before the Lord, not so as to be crushed, but to be healed.

Our Responsorial Psalm is the prayer of those standing amid ruins: “Do not remember our iniquities. Let your compassion hasten to meet us.” It is not a bargain. It is a plea. With God there is mercy. With God there is always help. The Gospel Acclamation (Psalm 95:8) answers this plea: “Harden not your hearts.” Our liturgy gives us our map. Confess, cry out, do not harden your hearts.

The Gospel from Luke, however, is a hard mercy. “Woe to you, Chorazin. Woe to you, Bethsaida.” These towns saw signs, and heard His teaching, and yet refused to change. Jesus contrasts them with Tyre and Sidon. Just one verse earlier He warns that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the Day of Judgement than for a town that shuts its door to the Kingdom (Luke 10:12). The prophets help us to see why. In Ezekiel 16:49–50 the sin of Sodom is named as pride, too much food, and not caring for the poor. It was a city that closed its gates and its hands. Genesis 19 also tells of attempted sexual violence, and Jude 7 remembers Sodom for going after wrong desires. Taken together the message is plain: when people

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use and abuse others, ignore the needy, and shut out the stranger, they close their hearts to God. Wisdom 19:13–14 says the same, calling Sodom a people who hated strangers. Theirs was a closed table. A closed gate. A closed heart.

In Zimbabwe today we know how doors can close: when corruption steals public goods, when water runs brown, when drought and high prices leave families hungry, when young people cannot find work. Our Catholic Social Teaching calls us to reopen the door: to place dignity before profit, fair wages over quick gain, clean water as a right, the stranger received as Christ. Privilege is not a shield. It is a summons to do more for the least.

Saint Francis Borgia, priest of the Society of Jesus, whose memorial we keep in the Society today, understood doors. Born a grandee of Spain, he stepped through the door of humility. After deep conversion he entered the Society and later served as its third Superior General. He strengthened community life, fostered mission, and taught that the only safe greatness is service for the greater glory of God. His life links Martha's work to Mary's listening, action to adoration, policy to prayer.

Let us pray and enter the scene in our imagination, and stand with one of the seventy-two at the gate of Chorazin. You carry peace and good news. The gatekeepers glance, then turn away. Hear Jesus say, "Whoever listens to you listens to me." Now shift. Kneel with Baruch's people in a ruined street. Let the words of the Psalm rise from your chest. Do not rush. Notice what stirs: sorrow, yes, but also courage.

Concrete steps keep the door open. Perhaps make the examen this evening: ask yourself, where did I allow my heart to harden, where did I open a door to grace or mercy? Pray for leaders and become one in your sphere of influence. As Pope Leo XIV keeps reminding the Church, peace begins in communities that listen, speak truth, and serve together.

The door is not far. It is as close as one honest prayer, one just decision, one act of welcome. Open it, and you will find He was on the threshold all along.

For our prayer this morning:

- Where did I harden my heart today, and what grace do I need to open it tomorrow?

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- Whom is God sending to my gate, and how will I receive them in justice and mercy?
- What one concrete change will I make this week so that my life, like St Francis Borgia's, serves God's greater glory and my neighbour's good?

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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.