



Thursday of the 27th Week in Ordinary Time



Date: Thursday, October 9, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Malachi 3:13–20b

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 1:1–4, 6 | **Response:** Psalm 40:5a

Gospel Acclamation: Acts 16:14b

Gospel Reading: Luke 11:5–13

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

The readings today are about two kinds of people: those who give up, and those who keep knocking—or keep answering the knock.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In the first reading from the prophet Malachi we hear a familiar cry of frustration. God's people are discouraged. They look at the world and ask, "*What's the use of trying to be good?*" The proud flourish. The dishonest get ahead. Meanwhile, those who try to live faithfully are mocked, overlooked, left behind. We've heard this before. We've felt it.

Here in Zimbabwe, that question echoes quietly in the queues for basic goods, in the corners of struggling clinics, in the dreams of young people who've studied hard only to find closed doors. We know the feeling: "*Is God even watching?*"

But Malachi offers us a different picture—of those who remain faithful. They come together. They speak of God's name with reverence. They encourage one another. And we're told something remarkable: God listens. God remembers. It's as though heaven opens a book, and their names—the names of those who stayed faithful—are written down, not for show, but for love.

To these, God promises not just survival, but sunrise. "*The sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.*" In the ancient imagination, the sun's rays were seen as wings reaching out to touch the earth—warming, waking, healing. This is no soft glow. This is light that restores what the darkness tried to steal.

Today's Psalm takes up the same promise. The one who delights in God's law is like a tree planted by water—deep-rooted, fruit-bearing, not shaken by storms. The wicked, though, are like chaff—light, restless, blowing wherever the wind takes them. Here again, God is asking: what are you rooted in? What do you lean on when life dries up?

Then comes the Gospel where Jesus tells a small but unforgettable story. A man knocks on his neighbour's door at midnight, looking for bread. The door is locked. The children are asleep. But he keeps knocking. And eventually, the door is opened. Jesus says, "*Ask, and you will receive. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.*"

It's a lesson about prayer. But not just about repeating words. It's about trust. About being bold enough to knock. About staying in relationship with God, even when the door seems closed.

Jesus goes deeper still. He says the Father will give not just help, not just bread—but the Holy Spirit to those who ask. The Spirit is not one gift among many. He is the gift. The one who gives courage, who brings peace, who opens our hearts to God and to others.

And here we might remember something Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio once said—just days before he became Pope Francis. Speaking to his brother cardinals, he reflected on what happens when we forget to go out with the Gospel. He said, "The Church is called to come out of herself... to go to the peripheries." And then came the unforgettable line: "When the Church does not come out of herself, she becomes self-referential, and then she gets sick. ... Jesus is knocking from within, wanting to come out."

It was a reversal of the usual image. We often speak of Jesus knocking on the door from the *outside*, asking to come in. But Bergoglio pointed out that sometimes we've locked Him *inside*—locked Him within our safe routines, our rigid thinking, our fears and habits. Sometimes the knock is Christ asking us to let Him out—to let Him reach others through us.

Brothers and sisters, the knock we are urged to repeat is also the knock of the Holy Spirit, who never sleeps. He asks us each morning, "Will you open the door?" And when we answer, the Spirit gives us the light that Malachi called the sun of righteousness—healing us, and healing the world around us.

This Gospel isn't just about our persistence. It's about God's. The Spirit knocks at the door of our hearts with a love that doesn't tire. He speaks through Scripture, through moments of silence, through cries for help. He stirs our prayer. He awakens our compassion. He nudges us toward the poor, the forgotten, the edge. He calls us not just to pray—but to *open*.

And this asking, seeking, knocking—they are not simply one-time acts, but daily attitudes. For those of us in consecrated life, they become the posture of the whole vocation. To ask is to recognise that everything is gift, and to live in trustful poverty. To seek is to surrender our will in obedience, letting God shape our path. To knock is to offer ourselves, in love, to others—with open hands and open hearts. These words of Jesus are not only for private prayer; they are the shape of a life poured out.

That same Spirit stirred the hearts of the saints we remember today.

St Denis, a third-century bishop sent from Italy to preach the Gospel in what is now France, found himself in a land thick with pagan suspicion. He became the first bishop of Paris, preaching boldly and drawing many to Christ. But his courage angered those in power. He was arrested, tortured, and finally beheaded on the hill of Montmartre. And yet, tradition says that after he was killed, Denis stood up, picked up his head, and kept walking—still preaching along the way. Strange, yes. But not without meaning. It tells us something essential: nothing—not even death—could stop the Gospel. His witness walked on. He answered the knock. Right to the end.

St John Leonardi lived in 16th-century Italy, at a time when the Church was in need of renewal. Born to a poor family, trained as a pharmacist, he eventually felt a deeper call: to care not only for bodies but for souls. He became a priest, founded a congregation for the formation of clergy, and called the Church to return to holiness, to mission, and to the service of the poor. He ministered during times of plague and turmoil, staying close to the sick and forming faithful leaders for the future. He believed that renewal didn't start in Rome or in policy—but in the heart, stirred by the Spirit. He opened the door, again and again, wherever Christ knocked.

These saints didn't live easy lives. But they lived open ones. Their courage didn't come from themselves. It came from the Spirit who knocked—and found a door open.

And now, dear friends, it's our turn.

So let us ask for that same Spirit. Let us knock—not only for what we want, but for the wisdom to want what God wants. And let us also listen—for the knock of Christ on *our* door.

Before the day begins tomorrow, before the world stirs, try this prayer: “*Holy Spirit, where are you knocking today? Give me the courage to answer.*”

Because when we open the door, we find not only light—but healing. Not only grace—but joy. Not only strength—but Christ Himself.

So I leave you with three questions for your prayer today:

- Where in my life have I stopped knocking—and is the Holy Spirit inviting me to try again?
- What might it mean to open the door—to the Spirit’s work, to another’s need, to Christ’s call?
- What would change if I truly believed that the Spirit is already at work in me, knocking first?

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.

