



Tuesday of the 33rd Week in Ordinary Time



Date: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: 2 Maccabees 6:18–31

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 3:2–7 | **Response:** Psalm 3:6b

Gospel Acclamation: 1 John 4:10b

Gospel Reading: Luke 19:1–10

Preached at: the Chapel of Xolile Keteyi House in the Archdiocese of Durban, South Africa.

The readings today are about the small steps that help us meet God, the courage that keeps us faithful, and the love that changes our lives. Dear friends, brothers and sisters in Christ, we gather with open hearts, hoping for a word that steadies us and helps us walk forward with faith. Today, the Scriptures give us three moments where ordinary people take simple actions, and God works through them.

Our first reading from the Second Book of Maccabees introduces us to Eleazar, an elderly and respected teacher whose name means God has helped. He is told to break God's Law. Some friends even encourage him to pretend, to make it look as though he is obeying the king while secretly staying faithful. But Eleazar refuses. Not out of pride, but out of love for the young and out of respect for the God he has served all his life. His choice is calm, steady, and deeply courageous.

His story speaks quietly yet clearly into the struggles many people face here in South Africa, especially in communities where people carry heavy pressures: uncertainty about work, the daily stress of unreliable services, and the slow erosion of trust when those in power forget the people they serve. These are not simple challenges. They shape real lives. In such a world, integrity can feel fragile, yet Eleazar reminds us that integrity is not an impossible dream. It is lived in small choices: being fair when others are not, keeping a promise even when it costs, standing for what is right even when no one is watching. Catholic Social Teaching tells us that the dignity of a nation grows through the dignity of its people, and that dignity is strengthened by acts—often small—of honesty and courage.

Our psalm gives voice to someone surrounded by pressure. Many say God will not help him. Yet the psalmist rests. I lie down, I sleep, and I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. This quiet rhythm is familiar to many families in our country who wake early to commute long distances, who go to bed unsure how the next day will unfold, who carry both hope and worry side by side. The psalm does not promise an easy road. It promises that God walks with us through it. That God is present in hardship, steady in uncertainty, faithful in the long night. And that when we rise in the morning, we do not rise alone.

The Gospel from Luke brings us into Jericho, where Zacchaeus climbs a sycamore tree just to catch a glimpse of Jesus. His name means clean or pure, though his life has been marked by dishonesty. As a chief tax collector, he has benefited from a system that hurts others. People avoid him. They see him as beyond repair. But Zacchaeus takes one small step. He climbs. He wants to see Jesus. He does not know what will happen, but he reaches anyway.

Jesus sees him. Jesus calls him by name. Come down, Zacchaeus. I must stay at your house today. Jesus steps into his home before Zacchaeus changes anything. Mercy arrives first. And because mercy arrives first, his heart changes. His hands change. His life changes. He becomes a source of healing in the very community he once harmed.

Ignatian prayer invites us to picture the scene: the dusty road, the murmuring crowd, the rough branches of the tree, the surprise on Zacchaeus' face when Jesus calls him. And then to place ourselves there. What tree might I need to climb? What simple step could help me see Jesus more clearly? What part of my home, my routine, my heart is Jesus asking to enter so that he can bring healing and hope?

All three readings turn on one simple truth: God works through small steps. Eleazar stands firm. The psalmist whispers trust. Zacchaeus climbs a tree. Grace enters through these small openings.

This message fits beautifully with today's feast of the Dedication of the Basilicas of Saints Peter and Paul. These grand churches remind us not only of stone and architecture, but of lives changed by God. Peter, who failed, was for-

given. Paul, who persecuted, was transformed. Their stories remind us that God never abandons us, even when we stumble or stray. God builds his Church through people who allow themselves to be changed.

So, dear friends, today we are invited to rise. Rise like Eleazar with simple honesty. Rise like the psalmist with trust that God sustains us. Rise like Zacchaeus with courage to take a small step toward Christ. Rise like Peter and Paul with hearts ready for renewal. Rise here in South Africa with a hope that is neither naive nor shallow, but born from the real struggles and deep faith of our people. Rise knowing that small steps matter. Rise knowing that God sees them, blesses them, and builds something new through them.

As you pray this morning, I offer three questions:

- What small step can I take to come closer to Jesus this week?
- Where is God inviting me to choose honesty or faithfulness, even in small, hidden ways?
- How can I bring mercy, generosity, or encouragement to someone who needs hope?

May God bless our steps, strengthen our courage, and walk beside us always.

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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.

