



Saturday of the 5th Week of Easter



Date: Saturday, May 9, 2026 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** A

First Reading: Acts 16:1–10

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 100:1b–3, 5 | **Response:** Psalm 100:2a

Gospel Acclamation: Colossians 3:1

Gospel Reading: John 15:18–21

Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia.

This morning the word of God shows us a Church guided by the Holy Spirit, a Church learning to walk together.

In the first reading, Paul meets Timothy, a young man with promise. Timothy is not yet finished. He is still growing. Yet Paul sees that God can use him. That is a consoling word for religious life. God does not only call those who seem ready. He also calls those who are still being formed, those still learning how to trust, to pray, and to serve.

So formation should not make us afraid. It is not a time for pretending to be complete. It is a time for letting the Lord shape us. Timothy grows by walking with Paul, listening, learning, and sharing the mission. In the same way, a sister in formation or a Jesuit in formation grows by walking with others and allowing God to work patiently in the heart.

Then the reading shows us something else. Paul and his companions want to go one way, but the Spirit does not allow it. They try another way, and again the door is closed. Only later comes the vision from Macedonia: “Come over and help us.”

This is an important lesson. God does not always guide us by making everything easy. Sometimes he guides us through closed doors. Sometimes a path we wanted does not open. Sometimes our plans change. In religious life, that is very familiar. Not every closed door is a failure. Sometimes it is part of God’s guidance. The question is not simply, “What do I want?” but “What is God asking of us now?”

That is also part of the Church's synodal life. We do not walk alone. We do not discern alone. We listen to the Word together. We listen to the Spirit together. We listen to one another together. Paul does not force his own plan. He walks with companions, and he lets the Spirit lead.

Saint Ignatius knew this too. He wanted to stay in the Holy Land, close to the places where Jesus had walked. It was a holy desire. But he was told to leave. The door closed. Yet that disappointment became a new road. Because he accepted that closed door, he was led to something more than he first imagined. Sometimes the Spirit leads us not by giving us the plan we first wanted, but by opening the mission God truly has in mind.

That is why discernment matters so much. A vocation grows through prayer and through the help of others. It grows through accompaniment, obedience, patience, and learning to hear God in community. For those in studies, your books and classes are also part of formation. Study too is a way of serving Christ and preparing for mission. Religious life should make us better listeners, more humble, and more ready to walk together.

The Gospel gives us another truth. Jesus says, "If the world hates you, know that it hated me before it hated you." Jesus is honest. He does not promise comfort or praise. He tells his disciples that if they remain close to him, there will be times when they are misunderstood or rejected.

That too is part of religious life. A life of prayer, chastity, obedience, simplicity, and service may not always be understood. Some will respect it. Some will ignore it. Some will think it has no value. Jesus tells us not to be surprised.

And this is where the psalm helps us. The Gospel is serious, but the psalm gives us the spirit in which to live it: "Serve the Lord with gladness." Not with bitterness. Not with self-pity. Gladness. Why? Because "he made us, we belong to him." Even when the road is difficult, we know to whom we belong. That is why a vocation can still be peaceful and joyful.

But we must hear the Gospel humbly. Sometimes the Church suffers because of our own sins, pride, or failures. Then we must repent. We must never confuse our own weakness with the cross of Christ. But even when we are faithful, there can still be misunderstanding. So Jesus says: do not lose heart. Stay with me.

This is encouraging for religious information. We are not called to make an impression. We are called to become faithful, generous, and free for the greater service of God. That is the true magis. We are called not to control the whole road ahead, but to take the next step with Christ. And we are not called to walk alone. We are called to walk with the Church, with our community, and with the companions God gives us.

So today the readings give us a simple path: remain open to the Spirit, accept being formed, walk with others, serve the Lord with gladness, and stay close to Jesus when the way becomes difficult.

And perhaps our prayer this morning can be simple: Lord, teach me to listen. Teach me to trust you when the road changes. Teach me to walk with others. Teach me to serve you with gladness because I belong to you.

For the week ahead, here are three questions for our prayer.

- When my plans change, do I listen for the Spirit or only resist?
- Am I learning to discern with others, or do I still hold too tightly to my own way?
- When I am misunderstood, do I stay close to Jesus and still serve with gladness?

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2026-05may-03-ya-et-09/>

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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.