



Tuesday of Holy Week



Date: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 | **Season:** Lent | **Year:** C

First Reading: Isaiah 49:1–6

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 71:1–4a, 5a–6b, 15, 17 | **Response:** Psalm 71:15ab

Gospel Acclamation: Hail to you, our King! Obedient to the Father, you were led to your crucifixion as a meek lamb is led to the slaughter.

Gospel Reading: John 13:21–33, 36–38

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

When we enter the sacred days of Holy Week, the words of Scripture take on a heightened urgency, as though they are whispering secrets from the heart of God. Today’s readings weave a tapestry of mission and betrayal, glory and grief, love and sacrifice. They invite us to step into the story—not as mere observers but as disciples called to wrestle with the mystery of Christ’s path and our own.

The prophet Isaiah speaks with the voice of a weary servant, one who has poured himself out in faithfulness, only to feel the weight of futility. “I thought I had toiled in vain,” he laments, “and for nothing, uselessly, spent my strength.” Yet even in the shadow of doubt, the servant finds an anchor in God’s promise: “My reward is with the Lord.” The Servant’s mission is not just for Israel; it stretches to the ends of the earth, a light for all nations. This vision of universal redemption reminds us that God’s plans often transcend our understanding. What seems like failure in our eyes may be the seed of something far greater, hidden yet unfolding in God’s time.

How often do we feel like this servant? We work, we strive, we hope, yet our efforts seem small against the vastness of the world’s pain. Here in Zambia, we see the challenges of poverty, inequality, and corruption. We wonder if our labour—our teaching, our advocacy, our daily acts of kindness—makes any difference. Isaiah’s words remind us that faithfulness, not success, is the measure of our mission. When we root our work in the dignity of every human person and the call to justice, we reflect God’s glory, even when we cannot see the fruits.

The psalmist takes up this theme of trust in the face of adversity. “In you, O Lord, I take refuge,” he cries. “Let me never be put to shame.” There is a profound intimacy in these words, a sense of clinging to God as a child clings to a parent. The psalmist knows what it is to feel surrounded by enemies, yet he proclaims, “It is you, O Lord, who are my hope, my trust, O Lord, since my youth.” This psalm invites us to consider where we place our hope. Is it in wealth, power, or recognition? Or is it in the One who calls us by name, who sustains us through every trial?

And then we come to the Gospel, a moment heavy with foreboding. Jesus, reclining at table with his disciples, reveals that one among them will betray him. The room is charged with tension, each disciple wondering, “Is it I?” Judas takes the morsel of bread and slips into the night—a night that symbolizes not just the absence of light but the absence of fidelity, love, and truth.

Yet even in this moment of betrayal, Jesus speaks of glory. “Now has the Son of Man been glorified,” he declares, “and in him God has been glorified.” How can glory emerge from such darkness? Jesus teaches us that true glory is found not in power or triumph but in self-giving love. His hour of glorification is the hour of the cross, where he empties himself completely for the sake of the world. This radical love is the heart of Holy Week, the lens through which we are invited to view our lives and our relationships.

Peter, with his characteristic zeal, promises to follow Jesus anywhere, even to death. But Jesus knows the truth: before the cock crows, Peter will deny him three times. This moment is not just about Peter’s failure; it is about our human frailty. How often do we make bold promises to God, only to falter when the cost becomes clear? Yet Jesus does not reject Peter. He sees beyond the denial to the repentance, beyond the failure to the fidelity that will follow. In this, we find hope. Our faith may be imperfect, our love inconsistent, but God’s grace is always greater.

As we reflect on these readings, we are confronted with questions that strike at the core of our discipleship. Are we, like Judas, clinging to self-interest, or like the servant, willing to yield to the greater glory of God? Are we prepared to trust God when the path is unclear, when our efforts seem fruitless, when betrayal cuts deep? Are we ready to love as Jesus loves—sacrificially, unreservedly, for the life of the world?

Let this Holy Week be a time of recommitment. Let it be a time to examine our hearts and align them more closely with the heart of Christ. And as we walk these sacred days, may we find the courage to embrace the cross, trusting that through it, we too will share in the glory of the resurrection.

To guide your prayer this week, consider these questions:

- Where in my life do I feel like the servant in Isaiah, toiling in vain? How might God be calling me to trust in his unseen work?
- How do I respond when I am betrayed or let down by others? Can I imitate Jesus in offering love and forgiveness even in such moments?
- What concrete steps can I take this week to reflect Christ's self-giving love to those around me, especially the poor, the vulnerable, and the marginalized?

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-04apr-15-yc-hw-tu/>

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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.