



Thursday of the 6th Week of Easter



Date: Thursday, May 29, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Acts 18:1–8

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 98:1–4 | **Response:** Psalm 98:2b

Gospel Acclamation: John 14:18

Gospel Reading: John 16:16–20

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

Today's Scriptures place us in that sacred space between Easter joy and Pentecost fire—a “little while,” as Jesus calls it, when His presence feels hidden, and yet hope quietly holds us.

In the Gospel, Jesus says, “A little while and you will no longer see me, and again a little while and you will see me.” The disciples don't understand. And we often don't either. We know what it means to wait, to wonder, to walk through grief without clarity. That “little while” is the ache of the mother waiting for her child to return. It's the worry of the student without a plan. The quiet loneliness of the priest at evening. The weariness of the carer who wonders if their service is seen. These are not abstractions; they are altars. Places where faith kneels low and learns to listen.

St Paul writes that all creation is “groaning in labour pains” (Romans 8:22). And in those groanings, we are invited to draw near to Christ—uniting our pain with His. St John Paul II taught that suffering, when offered with Christ, becomes a source of redemption. Your sorrow, your struggle, your silence—it matters. It bears fruit. Like seeds buried in Zambian soil after the first rains, something is stirring even if our eyes cannot yet perceive it.

We see that in Paul's mission to Corinth. He arrives not to applause, but to adversity. A city full of commerce and chaos, and a culture of resistance. Paul works by day with Aquila and Priscilla, preaches by night, and is rejected by many. But still, he perseveres. Crispus, a synagogue leader, believes, and his entire household is baptised. The Gospel finds a way.

Paul's ministry in Corinth reminds us that transformation often starts quietly. Evangelisation is rarely dramatic—it's faithful. Patient. Sometimes difficult. But as Paul VI reminded us, the world listens not just to teachers, but to witnesses. And witnesses show up even when the soil seems hard.

Our psalm today calls us to sing a new song to the Lord (Psalm 98). Not a song of despair or nostalgia, but of resurrection. Verse 4 reminds us to "Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!" This verse invites us to actively express our hope and joy, even when we are waiting for God's promises to be fulfilled. This new song is forgiveness offered. It's reconciliation in strained relationships. It's the quiet resolve to serve the poor even when change comes slowly. It's the rhythm of Catholic Social Teaching made flesh—honouring the dignity of each person, and making a preferential option for the poor. This song must rise from our streets and homes, from schools, clinics, kitchens, and chapels. Faith that feeds. Hope that heals. Love that lifts.

And all of this prepares us for the Ascension which—in this Diocese—we will celebrate on Sunday. Christ does not ascend to leave us, but to be present in a new way. The Ascension is not an ending but an entrusting. Christ entrusts the mission to us, and in waiting for the Spirit, we become the space where heaven meets earth, the "little while" where God labours through our faithfulness. As Pope Benedict XVI wrote, the Ascension is not absence—it's transformation. Jesus goes so the Spirit may come, and His body—the Church—might stretch into every corner of creation.

Here in Zambia, we know what it means to live the "little while"—when hunger lingers though the rains have come, when education is promised but work remains out of reach, when dignity is deserved but denied. And yet, God is always sowing resurrection in our waiting.

Today we also remember Pope St Paul VI, who led the Church with courage and patience in a time of great change. Paul VI once reminded us in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* that the Church's very reason for being is to bring the Good News to every human heart. And he knew that such a mission demands patience—especially when change is slow and the way unclear. His life whispers to us: hold on, press on, love on—even in the "little while."

I remember a time when my future felt like fog—nothing clear, only questions. I walked, prayed, served where I could, unsure if any of it mattered. But in the silence, God was shaping something. Looking back, I see it now: that ‘little while’ was not empty. It was sacred ground.

And so, if you find yourself in a “little while” today—a season of waiting, of grief, of silence—know that God is not far. He is hidden in your fidelity. He is already turning sorrow into joy, in ways you may not yet see.

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, as we prepare for Your Ascension, help us to be not just observers, but witnesses. Let us carry Your presence not only in our hearts but in our hands. Teach us to trust You in the waiting. Transform our grief into joy. Make us living signs of Your resurrection. Amen.

As we leave this sacred space, let us ask:

- Where am I being asked to wait—and trust—in the dark?
- Where is the Spirit inviting me to be a witness—to bring hope, to serve quietly, to forgive boldly?
- How might my sorrow become a song—or a small act of love—that helps another rise?

May we walk through the “little while” in faith—until joy, at last, breaks through.

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-05may-29-yc-et-06/>

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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.

