



## Wednesday of the 7th Week of Easter



**Date:** Wednesday, June 4, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C

**First Reading:** Acts 20:28–38

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 68:29–30, 33–36b | **Response:** Psalm 68:33a

**Gospel Acclamation:** John 17:17ab

**Gospel Reading:** John 17:11b–19

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

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**A**s we continue our journey through the Easter season, the Church gives us two parting voices—Jesus in the Upper Room, and Paul on the shores of Miletus. One speaks with the tenderness of divine love; the other with the urgency of apostolic care. And both speak of consecration. Both speak of truth. And both leave no doubt: Christian life is not survival—it is witness.

Jesus prays, “Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth.” He does not pray for escape, but for endurance. Not that we would be hidden from the world, but that we would be sent into it. Not simply believers, but bearers of the truth. Consecrated. Commissioned. Called. Jesus sanctifies himself so that we too may be sanctified in truth—set apart as he was, sent as he was, sustained as he was. And this consecration is not a flight from the world, but a call to inhabit it differently: to live not by the logic of power, but by the rhythm of grace; not by fear, but by fidelity; not for self, but in love.

Paul, facing the road ahead, lays down the staff of leadership with trembling hands and a fearless heart. He warns of wolves. He names the danger. And he entrusts the Church not to strategy or strength, but to “the word of grace that can build you up.” He knows that the greatest threat to the Gospel is not persecution from without, but distortion from within. So his warning is clear: we must be vigilant. We must be discerning. And we must be unwavering in our commitment to the integrity of the truth we have received.

But this truth—this living, burning truth—is not remote. It is not sealed behind scholarly walls or buried beneath doctrinal formulas. It is not the possession of the few. It is incarnate. It walks among the people. It breathes in the life of the

Church. And it is discerned not only in solemn proclamations, but also in the *sensus fidelium*—the sense of the faithful, that deep, Spirit-guided instinct that dwells in the hearts of God’s people.

This *sensus fidelium* is not a poll. It is not a popularity contest or a majority vote. It is a supernatural appreciation of the faith—a grace by which the faithful, united with one another and with the Church, spontaneously recognise what is true, what is holy, what is of God. It is not infallible in the individual, but it is trustworthy in the communion—when hearts are united in prayer, in practice, in love. The Church listens to that voice. She must.

And this listening is not sentimental. It is ecclesial. Consider, for example, the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*. What began in the quiet struggle of one man discerning the voice of God amid the noise of his own desires became, through the lives of the faithful and the wisdom of the Church, a trusted path of encounter with Christ. The Exercises were not imposed from above—they emerged from experience, were tested by discernment, and confirmed in communion. This is how truth grows within the Church: not shouted from a platform, but recognised in prayer, lived in love, and received in humility.

This work of discernment is especially vital in our own time—a time swollen with opinion and starved of wisdom, where headlines masquerade as truth and “alternative facts” cloud the common good. In such a world, the Church must not merely echo slogans or retreat into silence. She must speak clearly, listen deeply, and remain anchored in the truth that does not shift with the winds of manipulation. Now more than ever, we need a people formed in the discipline of discernment—people who can distinguish the voice of the Shepherd from the clamour of the wolves. A people consecrated in the truth.

This process is not a monologue, but a dialogue. A conversation between the faithful, theologians, and bishops. Each has a role. Theologians give voice to the experience of faith, shaping it with reason, testing it against tradition. The Magisterium listens, weighs, and ultimately judges what is authentic in light of Scripture and the apostolic deposit. It is not a one-way street. The Magisterium listens to the faithful, and the faithful attend to the Magisterium. This is not relativism—it is reverence. Not chaos, but communion. This is the rhythm of a Church that is alive.

And we must say it plainly: **It's not true because it's Catholic. It's Catholic because it's true.** Because it reflects reality as God has made it, as Christ has redeemed it, and as the Spirit continues to reveal it.

That truth must not remain in books alone—it must take flesh in lives. Here in Zambia, truth must enter the places where it is most threatened: in rural clinics short on medicine, in classrooms where hope flickers, in families quietly strained by the weight of daily survival. Consecration happens not only at the altar. It happens where the Gospel is lived with integrity. As Psalm 68 reminds us, “God gives power and strength to his people.” Strength not for domination, but for witness. Power not for display, but for mercy.

And so, in this Easter light, let us pray for the unity Christ himself desires: “that they may be one, as we are one.” Let us listen to one another with humility. Let us seek the truth in love. And let us work—not in isolation, but in communion—for the good of all.

Let us ask:

- Am I listening for the truth—not only in doctrine, but in the lives of God's people?
- Am I living as one set apart by the Word—not only in belief, but in action?
- Am I open to the Spirit's voice—speaking not only through authority, but through experience, through the faithful, through the poor?

Christ has prayed for us. The Spirit walks with us. The Word still speaks.

May we be found faithful—set apart, sent forth, and sanctified by the truth.

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