



Memorial of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary



Date: Monday, November 17, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: 1 Maccabees 1:10–15, 41–43, 54–57, 62–63

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 119:53, 61, 134, 150, 155, 158 | **Response:** Psalm 119:88

Gospel Acclamation: John 8:12

Gospel Reading: Luke 18:35–43

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

Dear friends in Christ,

The readings today are about seeing clearly, staying faithful, and trusting God when the world pulls us in different directions.

Our first reading from the First Book of Maccabees places us in the second century before Christ, when the Jewish people found themselves caught between two very different eras of leadership. A century and a half earlier, around 330 BC, Alexander the Great swept through the region. He introduced Greek culture widely, founding cities and encouraging learning, but he usually allowed the peoples he conquered to keep their own customs. For all his ambition, he understood that faith and tradition cannot simply be crushed.

But after his death, the empire shattered. One of the successor kingdoms, the Seleucid Empire, took a much harder line under Antiochus IV, who became king in 175 BC. Unlike Alexander, he tried to force uniformity. He banned Jewish practices, burned their Scriptures, defiled the Temple, and punished those who resisted. Under this pressure, some people surrendered their identity, hoping to fit in. Others refused, even at the cost of their lives. They saw that once you begin giving up the small pieces of faith, the larger pieces follow quickly.

We know this kind of pressure today. In South Africa, fear has sometimes turned into attacks on migrants. In Zimbabwe, the weight of economic struggle can tempt many to give up, lose hope, or compromise their values. These moments ask us whether we will keep our spiritual clarity or let it fade for the sake of comfort.

The responsorial Psalm gives us the inner voice of someone living through such strain. The psalmist feels surrounded by the wicked, trapped by the arrogant, and hunted by those who ignore God's ways. Yet he clings to God's word. He knows that when the world feels unsteady, Scripture steadies the heart. It is the gentle wisdom of the examen: When did I feel pressured today? What anchored me? Where did God give me a small light to follow?

Then the Gospel brings us to Jericho. A blind man sits by the road, waiting. He cannot see Jesus, but he can sense that grace is near. So he cries out. The crowd tries to silence him, as crowds often silence those on the edge. But he keeps calling. He believes that Jesus sees him even if he cannot see Jesus.

Jesus stops, as he always does when someone cries out for mercy. He asks, What do you want me to do for you? The man answers simply, Lord, let me see again. And sight returns. His life opens. The one the crowd tried to push aside becomes the one through whom the crowd praises God.

This question of Jesus is central to Ignatian prayer. What do you want me to do for you? When we sit with it honestly, our real desires begin to rise. We notice where we are blind. We notice where we need healing. We notice the parts of our life that have grown dim.

Today we celebrate Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, who lived in the thirteenth century. Though she was born into royalty, she refused to close her eyes to suffering. She saw Christ in the hungry, the sick, and the forgotten. She gave away her own resources, welcomed the poor into her home, and founded places of care. While Antiochus tried to suppress the weak, Elizabeth lifted them up. She teaches us that true sight is not only in the eyes but in the heart.

If we draw all these threads together, one theme runs through the centuries: the grace to see.

Alexander allowed cultures to survive;

Antiochus tried to erase them;

the Maccabees saw what was worth defending;

the psalmist saw God's word as a steady guide;

a blind man saw Jesus with faith before he saw him with his eyes;

and Saint Elizabeth saw Christ in the poor.

And Jesus turns to each of us today and asks: Do you want to see as I see?

As you pray this week, I leave you with three questions:

- Where am I tempted to compromise my values, and what strength do I need from God?
- Whose quiet cry for mercy have I overlooked, and how can I listen more deeply?
- When Jesus asks me, What do you want me to do for you?, what desire rises honestly in my heart?

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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.