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Thursday of the 11th Week in Ordinary Time

Date: Thursday, June 19, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: 2 Corinthians 11:1–11
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 111:1b–4, 7–8 | **Response:** Psalm 111:7a
Gospel Acclamation: Romans 8:15bc
Gospel Reading: Matthew 6:7–15
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

There are few things more revealing than what we're willing to give up for love.

Today's readings press that question into our hearts. St Paul, worn yet unwavering, speaks with the ache of someone who has emptied himself for his people. The psalmist, wide-eyed with wonder, praises the enduring works of God. And Jesus—Jesus gives us not a theory of prayer, but a way of living, in the Our Father.

To the Corinthians, Paul writes like a loving father who has spent himself for his children, only to watch them slip toward danger. His words are sharp, even jarring: "I robbed other churches to serve you." He is not boasting, but bearing witness—witness to the kind of love that gives until it hurts. Not for applause. Not for gain. But because the Gospel is worth everything. Paul's humility isn't self-pity—it's the honesty of love that has no illusions left. And so we ask ourselves here in Zimbabwe, in our families, in our parishes, in our ministries: Are we loving like that? Are we serving when it's inconvenient, when it costs us our pride, our comfort, our control?

The psalm today shifts our gaze upward and outward: "Great are the works of the Lord… full of splendour and majesty." Not simply mighty, but good. God's power is clothed in mercy, and His greatness is displayed not in thunder but in faithfulness. In Zimbabwe, where so many face economic strain, unstable prices, joblessness, and the burden of caring for family with little support—how deeply we need this reminder. That God's works are not just strong—they are reliable. And that those who are wise, truly wise, "seek them out." Not in theory, but in

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the small choices of the everyday. Do we seek God's justice in how we treat our workers? Do we reflect His mercy in how we speak to our children, our spouses, our neighbours?

And then we come to the Gospel. A prayer we know so well we often forget to feel it. But Jesus doesn't teach the Our Father as poetry. He gives it to us as a path. "Our Father…"—already we are pulled out of selfishness. Already we are placed in a family. "Give us this day our daily bread…"—we are taught to trust, not to store up. "Forgive us… as we forgive…"—we are called to be agents of reconciliation, not hoarders of grudges. It is the most revolutionary prayer ever spoken. Not because of the beauty of its words, but because of the boldness of its demands.

There's a story from a war-torn country. Children had been rescued from horrific violence and finally placed in safety. But even in warm beds, they couldn't sleep. Fear followed them into the night. One evening, a caregiver had an idea. She gave each child a simple piece of bread—not to eat, just to hold. That night, they slept. Not because their memories vanished, but because holding that bread, they believed they were secure: that there will be food tomorrow.

"Give us this day our daily bread." It's about more than hunger. It's about trust. And in our own context—where a mother in Mbare stretches mealie meal to feed five, where a university student at UZ walks kilometres because transport is unaffordable, where pensioners live on crumbs—this line becomes a cry, and a promise. God has not abandoned us. And we are called not just to pray for bread, but to become it—for one another.

At the monastery of Pater Noster near Bethany, the Lord's Prayer is inscribed in dozens of languages. A visual testimony to the prayer's universality. It crosses tribes, borders, currencies. And in Zimbabwe today, we must hear that call with urgency. Catholic Social Teaching—the Church's teaching on justice and the common good—urges us to uphold the dignity of every person, especially the poor and voiceless. This means working for fair wages, access to healthcare and education, and a society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Jesus' prayer is not neutral—it is radical. It dismantles the systems of exploitation and replaces them with mercy. In a society riddled with corruption, informal survival

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economies, and political tension, we are summoned to be a different kind of people. Not only critics of injustice—but builders of peace. Bearers of forgiveness. Disciples of trust.

And we are not without models. Today we honour Saint Romuald, the founder of the Camaldolese Order—a man of silence and courage. Born into wealth and status, he walked away from power to pursue God more deeply. He reformed monastic life, not to make it stricter, but more honest. More stripped down. More like Christ. For Romuald, prayer was not an escape from life, but a deeper immersion into its mystery. His example challenges us: Are we quiet enough to hear God's voice? Are we willing to live with less so that others might have more?

So we return again to the Our Father. Not to recite it, but to be shaped by it. "Thy Kingdom come…" Not in the sky, but here—in our businesses, in our classrooms, in our offices, our kombis, our queues and clinics. It comes when we forgive. When we share. When we trust. When we act not out of fear, but out of the confidence that God is good—and His works endure.

Let us close with three questions we could bring in to our own prayer today:

- How can I let the words of the Our Father reshape my way of thinking, speaking, and acting?
- Whom do I need to forgive—or ask forgiveness from—so that my prayer can be more truthful?
- What bread can I give to someone in need this week—what concrete act of mercy, justice, or loving presence?

May we, like Saint Romuald, become quiet enough to be brave, humble enough to be strong, and prayerful enough to become bread for the world, broken and given for all.

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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.

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