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Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

Date: Friday, June 27, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Ezekiel 34:11–16
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 23:1–6 | **Response:** Psalm 23:1
Second Reading: Romans 5:5b–11
Gospel Acclamation: John 10:14
Gospel Reading: Luke 15:3–7
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

My dear brothers and sisters,

Some truths ask us not to rush. They draw us in slowly, like walking into a quiet chapel, asking us to listen more with the heart than the mind. Today, the Church gives us one of these truths to contemplate—the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This feast began in the quiet of a small convent chapel in 17th-century France, when Jesus revealed to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque the burning love of His Heart for the world—wounded by indifference, yet wide open in mercy. Over time, what began as a hidden devotion grew into a solemn feast for the whole Church, calling us to return love for love, and to trust in the compassion of Christ's Heart.

This is not just a familiar image or an old tradition. The Sacred Heart is the living heart of Jesus—still beating, still burning, still broken open for the world. A heart that holds our names. A heart that carries our wounds. A heart that never stops loving.

And we must begin with this truth: He loved us first. Pope Francis reminds us of this in his final encyclical, Dilexit Nos: "We have come to know and believe in the love that God has for us… because He loved us first." Before we prayed, before we chose, before we understood—He had already written our names in His love.

And not just in some heavenly book. "Each of us," says Dilexit Nos, "can look within His Heart and see our name carved in letters of love—letters that only true love can write and only true love can read."

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Imagine that now. Close your eyes if you like. See the Sacred Heart before you—open, wounded, radiant with mercy. See your name there. Not written in ink, but in compassion. Not because you earned it, but because you are loved.

These wounds—His wounds—are not marks of defeat. They are signs of His faithfulness. They show us that real love suffers, not to punish, but to redeem. These are the wounds of a love that enters pain to heal it. A mercy that never ends.

We see that love already in the voice of Ezekiel: "I myself will search for my sheep… I will bind up the injured… I will strengthen the weak." This is not a God who waits for us to climb up to Him. He comes down into the valleys. He walks the dry riverbeds. He calls us by name in the dust of our lives.

And the psalm answers with trust: "The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want." This is not the voice of someone who has had an easy life—but someone who has learned that God never leaves. That His Heart never closes. That His mercy does not run out.

Then Jesus tells us the parable. The shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to find the one. It's not efficient. But it's love. Love that notices absence. Love that risks the wilderness to bring one heart home. That is the love of the Sacred Heart.

And here in Zimbabwe, this love meets a very real need. We live in a land where people are lost not only in spirit, but in systems. Where corruption and silence make the poor feel invisible. Where young people carry the weight of unemployment and broken trust. The Sacred Heart does not look away from this. It calls us not only to feel—but to act. To work for justice. To speak for the voiceless. To carry those who can no longer walk on their own.

The Sacred Heart is not only a quiet prayer in a chapel—it is a call to love with courage in the street, in the parish, in the fields of injustice. As Dilexit Nos says, the Sacred Heart is "not just something to admire—it is something that sends us out."

Pope Francis called this "a revolution of tenderness." Not a weak love, but a strong one. The kind that binds wounds and breaks chains. The kind that forgives, and fights for what is right.

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And all of this—this love, this mercy, this mission—comes to us most clearly in the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, we do not only remember the Sacred Heart. We receive it. We touch the same Heart that was pierced on the cross. We are fed by it. We are sent by it. Each Mass is an invitation to come closer to the One who gave everything—His body, His blood, His heart.

Saint Margaret Mary, who received the visions of the Sacred Heart, was not great in the world's eyes. But she let Jesus shape her. She loved in silence. She obeyed in suffering. She teaches us that holiness is not about being loud—it is about being faithful.

And so I ask you now to take a moment of silence.

Let us pause.
Imagine Jesus standing before you.
What is His face like as He looks at you?
What does He say?
What wounds is He showing you—not to shame you, but to show you how far love will go?

[Brief pause]

Carry this image in your heart as you go into the days ahead.

And take with you these three questions:

- Where in my life do I need to remember that He loved me first?
- Can I believe that my name is truly written on His Heart—and live from that truth?
- Who in my world—today, this week—needs to be carried in love, not in theory, but in real, practical mercy?

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is not just a devotion. It is a direction. A way of living. A call to trust and to go.

Let His Heart lead you.
Let His wounds heal you.
Let His Eucharist strengthen you.
Let His justice guide you.

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And may your heart become more like His: open, strong, tender, and faithful.

Amen.

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