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Friday of the 13th Week in Ordinary Time

Date: Friday, July 4, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Genesis 23:1–4, 19, 24:1–8, 62–67
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 106:1b–5 | **Response:** Psalm 106:1b
Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 11:28
Gospel Reading: Matthew 9:9–13
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

Good morning, everyone,

Sometimes, it's in the quiet acts—measured steps, open hands, a fair word spoken—that mercy takes shape. Today's readings unfold like this: slowly, steadily, as though God were whispering, This is how I move—quietly, faithfully, mercifully.

We begin with Abraham, who is grieving. He does not grasp or demand. He speaks with respect, insists on paying what is just. In buying Sarah's burial place, he honours both the dead and the living. There is something tender in his insistence—a kind of mercy wrapped in dignity. Abraham does not rush God's promise. He walks within it, patient and attentive. Providence, in this moment, is not thunder from the heavens, but a quiet agreement under a tree.

Then we follow the servant, sent to find a wife for Isaac. He prays for guidance but does not control the answer. And it is Rebekah, with water jars and willing arms, who arrives. Her kindness is not rehearsed. She simply sees a man and his camels in need, and she responds. Sometimes mercy is just that—a readiness to respond, to meet the need that is right in front of you. She, too, steps into God's unfolding promise.

The Psalm today sings what the others only show: The Lord's mercy endures forever. It is the same thread—running through tents and camels and wells, running through our own ordinary hours. Pope Francis once said that mercy is how God draws near to us—not when we have things figured out, but exactly when we are unsure, distracted, or slow to move.

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And then comes the Gospel. Jesus sees Matthew at his desk. The scene brings to mind Caravaggio's painting in the church of San Luigi dei Francesi in Rome. You may know the one. The light cuts through the shadows. Christ points, calling. And at the table, there is a young man still hunched over his coins. His fingers have not yet let go. Tradition long assumed the bearded man was Matthew, surprised by grace. But some scholars now suggest otherwise—that it is the younger man, still clutching silver, who is being called.

That detail changes everything. Because it means Christ does not wait for detachment or readiness. He calls us while our hands are still full—of plans, of fears, of distractions. His mercy does not ask for a cleared table. It breaks into the mess, and says, Follow me.

"I desire mercy, not sacrifice." Not the display of religion, but the daring intimacy of love. This is Christ's call: to move from judgement to compassion, from separation to communion.

Saint Elizabeth of Hungary lived this call with clear eyes. She saw Christ in the sick and the poor—not as problems to solve, but as people to love. Her mercy was not distant. It knelt beside suffering, touched wounds, shared bread. In her, mercy was not theory. It was embodied actions, and practical solutions.

And so, my dear friends, our invitation today is to listen for and follow the rhythm of God's quiet mercy. It is the whisper of His presence, not always dramatic or immediately visible, yet it is constant, faithful, and utterly transforming, inviting us to become instruments of that same love in the world.

As we go into this day, let us pause with three simple questions:

- Where in my life is mercy already quietly at work, and have I noticed it?
- Who sits at the edge of my attention, waiting not for judgement but for understanding?
- What small act of kindness can I offer today, not for display, but in quiet union with Christ's heart?

Let us pray:

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Lord Jesus, You do not wait until our hands are empty. You call us even as we hold on to other things. Help us to hear Your voice, to rise and follow, and to walk gently in the way of mercy. Amen.

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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.