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Memorial of Saints Joachim and Ann, parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Date: Saturday, July 26, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Exodus 24:3–8
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 50:1b–2, 5–6, 14–15 | **Response:** Psalm 50:14a
Gospel Acclamation: James 1:21bc
Gospel Reading: Matthew 13:24–30
Preached at: the Chapel of Richartz House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

God's most important work often happens in the quiet places—around kitchen tables, in small family homes, in long, ordinary days filled with love and waiting. Today, as we remember Saints Joachim and Anne, the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we don't look to great miracles or dramatic stories. We look instead to a simple home. A couple who loved each other, trusted God, and raised a daughter who would one day say yes to the Saviour.

In our first reading from Exodus, we hear about the covenant that God made with His people. Moses sprinkles the blood on the altar and on the people—it's a sign of deep belonging. In the ancient world, blood was life. So this act isn't just about laws or rules. It's about relationship. It's about God binding Himself to His people, like a family. And in families, what matters most isn't perfection, but faithfulness.

That's what we see in Joachim and Anne. They didn't have an easy life. Tradition tells us they waited many years for a child. But they didn't give up. They kept living their faith, loving each other, and trusting in God's plan. Their home became the place where Mary learned to pray, to love, and to listen. Holiness, for them, didn't look dramatic. It looked like everyday love and steady hope.

The psalm today reminds us that God doesn't want empty rituals. He wants thanksgiving. He wants us to call on Him, especially when life is hard. And He promises to deliver. Here in Zimbabwe, many of us carry heavy burdens—

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whether it's the struggle of feeding a family, paying school fees, or just getting by. But the psalm tells us: don't give up. God sees. God hears. And God saves.

Then in the Gospel, Jesus tells us the parable of the wheat and the weeds. A farmer sows good seed, but weeds show up too. The workers want to pull them out right away, but the farmer says, "Wait." Don't rush. Let both grow until the harvest.

That's a hard lesson, isn't it? We want to fix things quickly. We want to see results. But sometimes, we can't tell the difference between what's good and what's not. In our own hearts, we often carry both wheat and weeds—good intentions mixed with selfish ones, faith mixed with doubt. And in our families and communities too, we see both. Jesus asks us to be patient—with ourselves, with others, with the slow work of grace.

It's the kind of patience Joachim and Anne lived. Waiting for a child. Waiting for signs. Trusting that God was working, even when they couldn't see it.

This is also something Saint Ignatius teaches us in the Spiritual Exercises. We're invited to reflect: what is growing in me right now? What have I allowed to take root? Can I be honest about the weeds without tearing up the wheat too?

In a country like ours, where many people are tired—tired of waiting for change, tired of promises that don't come through—Jesus reminds us today: the Kingdom grows slowly. But it does grow. And we are part of that growing, in the way we love, the way we forgive, the way we show up for one another day after day.

Joachim and Anne show us that holiness is often hidden. But without their quiet faith, Mary might never have had the strength to say "Let it be." And without Mary's yes, where would we be?

So, this week, let's not look for grand gestures. Let's look instead at our homes, our communities, our daily routines. Let's ask: are we building a place where God's love can grow? Are we living the covenant not just with words, but with steady love?

And in prayer today, I invite you to sit with these three questions:

- Where is God asking me to wait, instead of rushing ahead?

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- What weeds am I too quick to judge—either in myself or in others?
- Who in my life has shown me faithful love, like Joachim and Anne—and how can I thank God for them?

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.