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Memorial of St Dominic, priest

Date: Friday, August 8, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Deuteronomy 4:32–40
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 77:12–16, 21 | **Response:** Psalm 77:12a
Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 5:10
Gospel Reading: Matthew 16:24–28
Preached at: the Chapel of Richartz House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

Dear friends in Christ,

In Scripture, memory is more than remembering the past. It's how we hold on to hope. It's how we begin the journey again, how we find the courage to keep walking the road. And today, the Word of God invites us to remember—not only what God has done, but who God has shown Himself to be.

In Deuteronomy, Moses stands at the edge of the Promised Land. He knows he won't enter it. He doesn't speak of plans or politics. He speaks of wonder. "Has anything so great ever happened?" he asks—not proudly, but with awe. Because the God he speaks of is not far away. He is close. So close He speaks from fire and thunder. Close enough to call, to stir, to change us.

That fire is the Spirit—the same Spirit who hovered over the waters in creation, who moved through the sea at the Exodus, who burned in the prophets, and who came down at Pentecost. This Spirit helps us remember what Jesus taught, and gives us courage to live it. Without the Spirit, memory becomes nostalgia. With the Spirit, it becomes a call to action.

This is not a tame God. This is not comfort. This is holiness—a nearness that shakes us awake. When God draws near, it's not to impress us. It's to invite us. The fire on Sinai was not a show—it was the start of a covenant. God spoke from the fire to form a people who would carry that fire into the world.

When we forget that nearness, when we turn faith into something safe or decorative, we lose touch with the living God. But God still speaks—in the blackouts of Harare, in the dry riverbeds of Matabeleland, in the quiet pain of the poor and the elderly. He comes not to crush, but to call.

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Today's Psalm helps us remember. "I remember the deeds of the Lord," the psalmist says again and again. Not because it's easy, but because it's necessary. When life feels stuck or silent, memory helps us keep going. The psalmist doesn't ask for new miracles. He remembers the old ones—God's power, God's mercy, God's guidance. Not vague ideas, but real events. This kind of memory gives strength. It is not retreating into the past. It is standing firm in the present.

In Zimbabwe, where so many are tired of waiting, where queues are long and futures uncertain, remembering what God has done becomes an act of faith. It is how we keep believing that God is still with us—still speaking, still leading, even when we can't see the path.

And this remembering is not just mental—it's something holy. In the Eucharist, we don't just recall Christ's sacrifice—we enter into it. We don't only speak of what happened long ago—we receive it now. That is what the Church means by "anamnesis": remembering that brings us into communion with Christ, here and now.

We have travelled far in the Gospel this week—through fire, through memory, through mercy. From mountain to sea, we now find ourselves on the road. And the road is not easy. Jesus says, "If you want to follow me, deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me." Denying ourselves doesn't mean hating ourselves—it means letting go of the need to be at the centre. It means setting aside our pride, our fears, even our comfort, to make space for Christ and for others. Saint John Chrysostom said it means being ready to give up our own body and safety for Christ's sake. It is sharing in His self-giving love—His emptying of Himself for us.

And the cross? It is not only personal—it is also public. It is not only about private struggles. It is about standing where Jesus stood: with the poor, the forgotten, the excluded. To carry the cross in daily life means choosing compassion when it's inconvenient, speaking truth when it costs us, building peace when conflict seems easier. It means refusing indifference. The Church's mission begins here—in the concrete, public witness of love.

Saint Dominic knew this. He preached not from cleverness, but from prayer. He handed on what he received in silence, in tears, in deep listening. He walked barefoot to feel the world's wounds. His preaching was gentle, honest, and full

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of God.

Dominic reminds us that evangelising begins not with arguing, but with listening. Not with shouting, but with living truthfully.

And Saint Ignatius? He teaches us freedom. He calls it “indifference”—not as not caring, but as not being held back by fear or ambition. It is the freedom to go where God sends us, even when we’d rather stay. To trust the way, even when it’s hidden. To follow the One whose footprints may be hard to see—but who never leaves us.

So let me ask you: Where are you in this story? Are you standing at the edge of something, wondering if God will act? Are you walking with Jesus, but finding it hard to follow? Are you being called to speak—not with your words, but with your life?

Remember this: God is not far off. His fire still burns. His footprints still guide. His cross still calls. And even when we can’t see the way, we walk with the One who knows it—the One who has said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

As you return to your day—your part of the road—carry these questions with you, not as a burden, but as an invitation to remember God’s love for you:

- What fire is God speaking from in my life—and am I willing to come close, even if it unsettles me?
- When God’s path feels hidden, what memories of mercy can I hold on to, to keep walking?
- What would it mean, this week, to let go of more of myself—for love?

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.

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