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Saturday of the 21st Week in Ordinary Time

Date: Saturday, August 30, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:9–11
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 98:1, 7–9 | **Response:** Psalm 98:9
Gospel Acclamation: John 13:34
Gospel Reading: Matthew 25:14–30
Preached at: the Chapel of Richartz House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe.

The readings today are about the seed God places in each heart, and the harvest He hopes to see—not a harvest measured only in numbers, but in love, in justice, in lives quietly given for the good of others.

Our first reading from the First Letter to the Thessalonians shows Paul speaking to a young community in which the seed of God's teaching has already begun to grow. They have learned to love one another, and their love is spreading like vines across Macedonia. But Paul, like a wise farmer, says, "Do so more and more." Keep tending the soil. Keep watering the roots. Work with your hands, live peaceably, let your lives be the quiet proof of what God can do. In the ancient world, Stoic philosophers also spoke of self-sufficiency, but their harvest was the self. For Paul, sufficiency comes from God, and the harvest is for the community.

Psalm 98 sings of the Lord who comes to judge the earth, and even the rivers and hills rejoice at His coming. Judgment, here, is the time of harvest, when God separates what is fruitful from what is empty. For us in Zimbabwe, where fields sometimes stand dry and farmers watch the sky for rain, this image of a just and generous harvester is powerful. We long for a day when the harvest will not be stolen by the few, when the fruits of the land and labour are shared fairly, when justice flows like a river, washing away the dust of corruption and greed.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells of a Master who plants seeds in a different form—talents entrusted to His servants. Two take what is given and put it to work, and their efforts yield a rich return. But one buries his seed in the ground, paralysed by fear. His problem is not that his gift was small, but that he never trusted the One who gave it.

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In the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, we are invited to place ourselves in the story. Imagine the Master pressing the talent into your hand—it has weight, it has value, it has potential. What will you do with it? Will you scatter it on the soil of service, where it may sprout slowly but surely? Or will you hide it away, safe from loss but also safe from growth?

In our own country, it is tempting to bury our gifts. Jobs are scarce, wages vanish in inflation, and those with influence sometimes misuse it for personal gain. It feels safer to retreat into survival mode, to plant nothing because we doubt anything can grow. But God calls us to plant anyway—to invest our love, our skill, our courage—trusting that His rain will come, perhaps in ways we do not expect.

The question for us is simple: will we be faithful farmers of what God has placed in our care? The day will come when the Lord of the harvest returns, looking for the fruit of our hands and the grain of our hearts. May we be found with arms full, and not with empty hands and excuses.

This week, in your prayer, walk through the fields of your life as Ignatius would invite—see the places where the soil is rich, and the places where it is hard. Hold the seeds in your palm, feel their promise, and ask:

- What seed has God given me that I have yet to plant, for fear it may fail?
- Where is He asking me to water and tend the work already begun, even if I do not yet see the harvest?
- How can I help ensure that the fruits of our labour—in my home, my community, my country—are shared with justice and joy?

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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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