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Monday of the 22nd Week in Ordinary Time

Date: Monday, September 1, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 96:1, 3–5, 11–13 | **Response:** Psalm 96:13b
Gospel Acclamation: Luke 4:18
Gospel Reading: Luke 4:16–30
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

Good morning, brothers and sisters.

Today we begin the Season of Creation and celebrate the 10th World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. The Church lifts up its voice—for the earth, and for all who suffer when the earth suffers. And our readings this morning invite us to listen for the sound of God's trumpet: a call to gather, a promise of hope, a sign that God is near—and that no one is left behind.

Paul writes to a grieving community in Thessalonica. They are afraid their loved ones who have died will be forgotten. But Paul doesn't give a timetable. He gives them something stronger: a picture.

> "The dead in Christ will rise first… then we who are alive will be caught up together with them… and so we will always be with the Lord" (1 Th 4:16–17).

This isn't only about the end of time. It speaks to our lives today—here in Zimbabwe, where many carry quiet griefs: the loss of loved ones, the ache of absence, the uncertainty of what tomorrow may bring. Paul's trumpet still sounds. His words remind us: no one is forgotten. Not in death. Not in life. Not by God.

> "Sing to the Lord a new song… Let the sea roar, let the trees rejoice… for He comes to rule the earth with justice" (Ps 96:1, 11–13).

God's judgement is not about punishment—it is about putting things right. It brings healing where there has been harm. As *Laudato Si'* reminds us, when creation rejoices, it is because justice is being done—for the poor and for the earth (LS 2–3).

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And here in our own land—where the soil cracks, rivers run dry, and smoke thickens the sky—creation is crying out. But it does not cry in vain. It waits, in hope, for God's healing hand.

In the synagogue of His hometown, Jesus reads from the prophet Isaiah:

> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me… He has sent me to bring good news to the poor… liberty to captives… sight to the blind… freedom to the oppressed" (Lk 4:18–19).

At first, the people nod. They are proud—"Is this not Joseph's son?" But then Jesus reminds them of stories they'd rather forget: how God's mercy reached outsiders—like the widow in Zarephath, and Naaman the Syrian (Lk 4:25–27). Suddenly, admiration turns to resistance. The Gospel comforts, then it challenges. It draws near, then it stretches us. God's mercy does not stop at our borders. It reaches beyond.

Imagine yourself in that synagogue. When Jesus names those beyond your circle, what stirs in your heart—joy, surprise, resistance? Let that stirring lead you deeper into His mission today.

The trumpet Paul mentions may sound grand, but here it comes gently—as we gather around this altar. In this small chapel, in this quiet moment, Christ draws us close again. In the Eucharist, we are held together—and given a taste of the great gathering to come, where none are left out.

If Jesus gathers all, then we are called to gather too.

This week, ask yourself:

- Who is grieving in our parish or neighbourhood?
- What part of creation—a dry field, a polluted stream, a neglected tree—needs your care?

A simple act—a visit, a prayer, planting a seed, choosing to walk instead of drive—can become a sign of God's healing (LS 91). These are not small gestures. They are the seeds of justice.

So let us carry the sound of that trumpet in our hearts. Let us sing the new song not only with our voices, but with our choices—our actions, our lives.

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Take these three questions into your prayer this week:

- Who feels forgotten, and how can I draw them near?
- What part of creation is calling me to care?
- What small act can I offer this week as Good News?

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.