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Friday of the 22nd Week in Ordinary Time

Date: Friday, September 5, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Colossians 1:15–20
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 100:1b–5 | **Response:** Psalm 100:2b
Gospel Acclamation: John 8:12
Gospel Reading: Luke 5:33–39
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

Christ is not simply a part of life — He is the beginning, the centre, the one through whom everything came to be. That's what Paul sings in his letter to the Colossians. Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. In Him, everything was made — the stars, the soil, the sea, and the soul. All things were created through Him and for Him. And in Him, all things hold together.

This is not abstract theology. It's an invitation — to see that Christ is present not only in our liturgy, but in the created world around us. In the morning sun, in the dry soil of Zimbabwe, in the quiet passing of the seasons. Nothing is outside His reach. And even now, as we grow older — even when we feel tired, worn, or unsure — He holds us still.

The psalm responds: "Serve the Lord with gladness." Not because everything is easy, but because everything belongs to Him. We are His. Not because of what we've done or failed to do, but because He made us and keeps us. That is the ground of our dignity — not our work, not our ministry, not even our faithfulness — just Him.

In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of newness: of a wedding, of cloth that won't patch, of wine that cannot be poured into stiff, unyielding skins. The message is quiet but firm. The kingdom is not a gentle update to what we already know. It is something entirely new — and it asks something new of us in return. Not just adjustment, but conversion. A reorientation of the heart toward God. It asks for space, for inner freedom, for the willingness to be changed.

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We don't always like being stretched. It's uncomfortable. But that is how love grows. That is how faith matures.

Today, the Church remembers St Teresa of Calcutta — Mother Teresa. She didn't begin by doing great things. She simply saw Christ in the poor, and let that sight change her. She let go of what was safe, and allowed love to reshape her life. That's the kind of newness Jesus is speaking about.

And maybe in this quieter chapter of our lives, that's the invitation: to let go of what no longer serves; to let Christ gently stretch our hearts once more, so that His life, His joy, His mercy can be poured into us — and shared.

Today, we remember with affection and gratitude the lives of those who have gone before us. We mark the 12th anniversary of Br Albano Marques Agulha, who served for many years in Lifidzi and died at the age of 98 in Braga, having lived a long life of quiet, faithful service. We also remember Fr Peter Morris, who died 65 years ago in a motorcycle accident while visiting Nairobi, at just 45, during his time of service at St Aidan's. His life, though brief, was poured out generously in the vineyard of the Lord.

And we especially hold in prayer Dominic's aunt, who I learnt last night has passed away. Let us pray for Dominic in a special way in these days of grief. And may his aunt now rest in the heart of Christ — the One through whom all things were made, and who will make all things new.

So we might ask ourselves, slowly, in prayer this morning:

- Where in me is the Spirit inviting greater freedom — freedom from fear, from habit, from control?
- Is there something I'm holding onto that no longer helps me love or serve Christ gladly?
- How might Christ be inviting me, gently, to be stretched — not for achievement, but 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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