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25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Date: Sunday, September 21, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Amos 8:4–7
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 113:1–2, 4–8 | **Response:** Psalm 113:1a, 7b
Second Reading: 1 Timothy 2:1–8
Gospel Acclamation: 2 Corinthians 8:9
Gospel Reading: Luke 16:1–13
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

Dear brothers and sisters,

> *"Hear this, you who trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land."* (Amos 8:4)

These words are not easy. They weren't when Amos thundered them in ancient Israel, and they aren't now. But we must hear them—because they speak to our streets and shops, our schools and payrolls, our politics and daily struggles. They name the theft of dignity and the betrayals of justice. And they tell the truth: God hears the cry of the poor. God sees the games of the powerful. And God does not forget.

In Amos' day, the temple was full. Worshippers gathered. Festivals were celebrated. But justice was missing. People sang to God with their lips but trampled the poor with their hands. Their religion was rich in ritual but poor in mercy. And Amos declares: God rejects it. Worship without justice is just noise.

But God's word does not end in warning. If Amos shows us what God sees, the Psalmist shows us what God does: *He lifts the poor from the dust and seats them among princes* (Ps 113). This is not only comfort—it is challenge. The Catechism teaches us that what we possess is not ours alone but entrusted to us by God for the good of all (CCC §2404). To worship this God is to reflect Him. Worship entails justice. Piety involves action.

Saint Paul urges Timothy—and us—to pray for *everyone*, including those in authority. Not because they are flawless, but because they shape the world we live in. Their choices can build or destroy, bring peace or deepen division. Paul calls

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us to pray for them, not with blind loyalty, but with discernment—that their hearts may turn toward justice and peace. Prayer is not weakness; it is participation. It entrusts their power to God's greater power.

And then Jesus tells us a strange story. A steward is about to lose his job. He has mismanaged what was entrusted to him. Facing crisis, he acts. He reduces debts, secures relationships, and his master praises him—not for dishonesty, but for prudence, for using what he still had, while he still could (Luke 16:8-9).

Jesus is not praising corruption. He is teaching prudence. The steward recognises that the resources in his hands are not permanent. He acts wisely, turning wealth into relationships, possessions into trust. He gave up profit to preserve community. He traded money for mercy, his commission for communion. He left with less wealth, but with more friends. And for this, the master commended him—not for dishonesty, but for prudence: for recognising the value of people over possessions, and acting before it was too late.

That's the heart of it. Money has its place—it's useful, yes—but it cannot be our foundation. It is not faithful. Financial freedom may offer a sense of security, but it doesn't make us less alone. The more liquid our wealth, the easier it becomes to stay detached. But stewardship calls us into relationship. It is not about standing on our own, but learning to stand with one another. The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church puts it plainly: private property always has a social function—it must serve the common good (§178). In the end, God does not praise us for clever accounting, but for courageous love—for the risks we take to build relationship, to walk away from self-interest, and to move toward each other.

But when we forget this vision of stewardship, we fall into the very patterns Amos condemned. Fuel vanishes, then returns at twice the price. Fares rise, markets inflate, salaries stay the same. The scales are not balanced. When Amos condemns false measures, we don't need to imagine—we've seen it - and survived it, with God's help! And as we continue this Season of Creation, Pope Francis reminds us that our stewardship is not only for one another, but also for the earth—our common home, entrusted to us by God. We are called to care for it, protect it, and pass it on as gift to those yet to come (Laudato Si' §49).

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Yet even here, we see hope. Families share what little they have. Young people help each other save. Parishioners give not from abundance, but from love. These are today's stewards. They remind us: we are not helpless. We are not owners of God's gifts—we are stewards. And good stewards act.

So let us begin:

- **Give** something real—a meal, a fare, your time.
- **Pray** for leaders by name. Entrust them to God's guidance and do not give up hope.
- **Consistently choose integrity**—be fair, honest, and compassionate in daily life.

Small steps matter. Together, they can shift a nation.

Now I invite you to imagine:
Amos, standing in the hot sun, denouncing corrupt traders. He speaks, though it costs him.
Paul, tired and old, in prison, still praying for rulers—even those who will harm him.
The steward, aware of his failure, yet not too late to act. In his final hours, he chooses generosity.

Now picture yourself.
Which of these figures speaks to you today? What is God asking of you—not someday, but now?

As we turn to the altar, we receive the Eucharist—our greatest treasure, freely given. Here we remember Christ, who *"though he was rich, yet for our sake became poor, so that by his poverty we might become rich"* (2 Cor 8:9). That is the heart of true stewardship: not clinging to wealth, but pouring out our lives in love—just as Christ did for us.

So let us ask ourselves:

- What do I cling to as "mine," when it is really God's gift?
- Where can I be more fair, more generous, more honest?
- What one concrete step will I take this week to live as a steward, not an owner?

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Lord Jesus, though you were rich, for our sake you became poor, so that by your poverty we might become rich. Give us Amos' courage, the psalmist's compassion, the steward's prudence, and Paul's faithful prayer. Make us builders of justice, servants of peace, and stewards of your gifts.

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.