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A homily for the 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Date: Sunday, September 28, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Amos 6:1a, 4–7

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 146:7–10 | **Response:** Psalm 146:1b

Second Reading: 1 Timothy 6:11–16

Gospel Acclamation: 2 Corinthians 8:9

Gospel Reading: Luke 16:19–31

Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House in the Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe.

The danger is not hatred but spiritual blindness — the failure to see the suffering of our neighbour, just as Amos warned the people of Zion. We may look without seeing. We may hear without listening. We may live without loving. That is the sleep of comfort, the numbness of routine, the blindness that makes us pass by Lazarus at the gate.

Dear friends in Christ,

The prophet Amos doesn't condemn music or rest or food. He warns against people who live only for themselves while others suffer. In his day, leaders feasted and sang while the nation crumbled. They didn't care—or maybe they stopped noticing. That's the danger: when comfort numbs us to injustice.

It's not so different in Zimbabwe. Some have fuel, fridges, even money to leave if things get worse. Others walk kilometres for water. Hospitals lack medicine. Teachers go unpaid. Yet life rolls on as if this were normal. That's blindness.

And yet—there are signs of hope. Neighbours share water from the same borehole. Families carry each other through hard times. Teachers still show up to class, even when salaries don't. Small communities pray together, share food, and keep faith alive. These are glimpses of God's Kingdom breaking through, signs that blindness does not have the last word.

The Psalm shows us the same truth. God sees. "The Lord raises up those who are bowed down, protects the stranger, upholds the widow and orphan." This is who God is. And if we follow Him, it's who we must be.

Jesus drives it home with a parable. A rich man in purple, eating well every day. A poor man, Lazarus, at his gate, ignored and invisible. When they die, the gap between them cannot be crossed. And here's a detail we shouldn't miss: Lazarus is the only character in all of Jesus' parables who is given a name. His name means "God helps." That's no accident. The man the world ignored is remembered, honoured, lifted up by God.

And notice this: by the standards of his society, the rich man was respectable. Perhaps even religious. He hadn't thrown Lazarus away. He may even have let him have the crumbs. By our narrow standards of "being a good person," there was nothing much to accuse him of. But in God's eyes, holiness is not measured by avoiding sins or keeping rules. It is measured by love. By whether we saw, whether we acted, whether we lived justice.

At the centre of the story is a table. The rich man's table was closed, food kept for himself, crumbs left for the poor. But God's table is different. At this altar, no one is rich and no one is poor. We come as beggars, receiving bread we did not earn. We come as Lazarus, lifted up by God's mercy. And so when we stretch out our hands to receive the Body of Christ, the question is unavoidable: will we live like the rich man, keeping God's gifts for ourselves, or like Christ, who breaks bread so that all may be fed?

That's the warning, and the invitation. Not only for the wealthy, but for all of us who rush past the people at our gates. Often not out of malice, but distraction, exhaustion, indifference. Yet the Gospel calls us to stop, to notice, to act.

That's why Paul tells Timothy: "Fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of eternal life." Faith is not passive. It's a fight. Eternal life starts now — each time we choose kindness over comfort, truth over silence, love over laziness.

And yes, it's hard. Hard to hope when money is tight. Hard to care for others when you're barely coping yourself. But faith is tested in those small, daily choices: to see, to listen, to give, to live awake.

Ignatius tells us to imagine ourselves in the Gospel. Picture the gate. Picture Lazarus. Smell the dust, feel the heat. Then ask: who am I walking past?

God sees Lazarus. Always.

The only question is: do we?

And if not — will we start now?

Because faith is not theory. It's not opinion. It's action.

To notice. To stop. To cross the gap.

That's the good fight. That's eternal life, starting today.

So let us end with three questions:

- Where have I stopped seeing the people around me?
- What comfort is keeping me from acting with love?
- What step can I take this week to cross the gap?

Amen.

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-09sep-28-yc-ot-26/>

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