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Memorial of Saint Francis of Assisi

Date: Saturday, October 4, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Baruch 4:5–12, 27–29
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 69:33–37 | **Response:** Psalm 69:34
Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 11:25
Gospel Reading: Luke 10:17–24
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

Sometimes it takes being made small to see what truly matters. Today our readings remind us that God reveals his joy not to the clever or the strong, but to the humble, the poor, and the broken-hearted. This is the heart of St Francis of Assisi's teaching, whom we celebrate today. He is remembered not for great worldly feats, but for letting himself be made little, and so being filled with a great light. It is fitting that his feast closes the Season of Creation. Francis, who called the sun his brother and the moon his sister in his wonderful *Canticle of Creation*, teaches us that caring for creation is not an optional task but part of praising God with our whole lives.

This week's liturgy has traced the same path. On Monday, the Archangels lifted our eyes to heaven. On Tuesday, St Jerome reminded us that God's Word draws all nations. On Wednesday, St Thérèse showed us the little way of trust. On Thursday, the Guardian Angels assured us of God's protection. On Friday, Baruch led us to confess our sins and to hope for mercy; Jesuits also honoured St Francis Borgia, who renewed the Society with humility. And today, Francis of Assisi gathers all these threads: heavenly vision, courage to rebuild, childlike trust, angelic protection, honest confession, and renewal in Christ.

Baruch spoke from exile: sorrow is real, but not the final word. Psalm 69 told us, "The Lord listens to the needy." Luke showed disciples rejoicing in their mission, but Jesus redirected them: do not glory in power—rejoice that you are known by God. And notice: seventy disciples were sent, recalling Moses and his seventy elders. Jesus is the New Moses, leading a new people, not with swords but with peace. Revelation comes to the humble, the childlike, those who trust.

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Francis lived that humility radically. He let go of wealth and status to cling to Christ. He saw creation as gift. He embraced the leper as Christ. He begged, he served, he loved. And he carried the peace of Christ even to the Sultan of Egypt, walking unarmed into the camp of Islam in the midst of the Crusades. In an age of war, he chose dialogue over violence. That choice speaks with urgency in our own time: in Gaza, where families endure death, displacement, and the destruction of their homes; in Syria, still scarred by war and intervention; in Myanmar, where civil conflict continues to displace millions; in Sudan, where famine and fighting devastate communities; and in Mozambique, where violence in Cabo Delgado has uprooted countless lives. St Francis shows us that peace is not naïve. It is the most radical imitation of Christ.

His life reminds us that holiness is simple, though not easy: to stand with empty hands before God, to see from below, from the Cross, and to walk as peacemakers with every creature. As the Season of Creation ends, his witness calls us to ecological conversion, to reconciliation, and to peace. Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* and *Laudate Deum* reminds us this is not politics but discipleship. And Pope Leo XIV, speaking this week, echoed Francis: peace with God, with others, with nature, and with ourselves cannot be separated.

As we go about our routines today, let us carry the humility of Francis, the hope of Baruch, and the joy of the disciples. God listens to the needy. He restores what is broken. He gathers his people for a new exodus. And he rejoices to reveal his heart to those who make space for it.

- This week, can I take one concrete step to live more simply, so I can listen more deeply?
- Where can I be an agent of peace—in my home, my work, or my community—instead of adding to division?
- What would it mean for me to rejoice, not in success, but simply in being known by God?

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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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