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Friday of the 27th Week in Ordinary Time

Date: Friday, October 10, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Joel 1:13–15, 2:1–2
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 9:2–3, 6, 8–9, 16 | **Response:** Psalm 9:9
Gospel Acclamation: John 12:31b–32
Gospel Reading: Luke 11:15–26
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

Brothers and sisters in Christ, today the Word of God invites us to ask: What are we filling our hearts with? Because if we leave them empty, something else—something darker—will come to take their place. The Gospel makes this very clear: it is not enough to sweep the house. We must fill it—with Christ.

In the first reading the prophet Joel calls the priests and people to wake up and mourn. The land is stripped bare. The locusts have come, and nothing green remains. But Joel is not only speaking about ruined crops. He is talking about the ruin of the soul. The "Day of the Lord" is near—not just as punishment, but as a moment of truth. A day when everything false will fall away.

This Day of the Lord is not only about fear. It is, as the Catechism reminds us, the moment when God's Kingdom breaks in to reclaim the world He loves. It is "the reign of Christ already present in mystery" (CCC 669)—and it demands a response.

The Psalm today gives us hope: "The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble." When the world seems harsh and barren, God does not abandon us. He is close to those who suffer, those forgotten by others. In our context here in Zimbabwe, where many feel pressed down by injustice, poverty, or silence, these words are a reminder of how God has sustained and saved us.

Then we come to the Gospel. Jesus has cast out a demon, but instead of rejoicing, some accuse Him of working with the devil. Jesus answers calmly: If Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? But then He adds something more: If it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.

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This phrase—"the finger of God"—is drawn from the Book of Exodus (Ex 8:19). It means: This is God's direct action. This is not magic. This is not coincidence. This is God entering your life—now.

But Jesus also warns: when a demon is cast out, the soul must not stay empty. If nothing good takes its place, the evil will return, stronger than before. This is a hard teaching. But it's true. A life cleaned up on the outside, but not filled on the inside, will not last.

St Ignatius of Loyola taught that the human heart is never neutral. He invites us to consider what spirit moves us—not just once, but every day. We cannot remain half-committed. Jesus says plainly: "Whoever is not with me is against me." These are not words of condemnation, but of clarity. The Kingdom of God requires a definite decision - there can be no half-measures.

And today, we remember someone who made that decision fully: St Daniel Comboni. A missionary bishop to Africa, he gave his life for the Gospel. He loved the poorest and most forgotten. His mission was not just to remove injustice, but to bring Christ. He did not just fight evil—he filled lives with hope, schools with children, hearts with dignity. He once said, "The Cross is the ladder to heaven." He knew what Jesus teaches us today: don't just clear out the darkness—welcome the light.

In Zimbabwe today, we know the feeling of emptiness. Many have tried to sweep their lives clean—to survive, to keep going—but there is still hunger, still fear, still silence. Today's Word asks us, gently but urgently: What now? Will you open your heart to Christ, or will you leave it unguarded?

The Kingdom is not a far-off dream. It begins now, when we say yes to God. When we act justly, pray honestly, forgive quickly, and love deeply. When we do that, we are no longer an empty house—we become a home for Christ.

Let us end with three questions for reflection, in the spirit of the Examen:

- What in my heart have I cleared out, but not yet offered to Christ?
- When have I tried to live "in the middle"—neither against God, nor fully for Him?
- What is one small thing I can do today to invite the Holy Spirit into my life again?

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Let us pray. Lord, fill the empty rooms of our hearts with Your Holy Spirit. Teach us to say yes to Your Kingdom, and no to all that divides and destroys. Make us, like St Daniel Comboni, a people of hope, peace, and courage. 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.