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Thursday of the 28th Week in Ordinary Time

Date: Thursday, October 16, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Romans 3:21–30
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 130:1b–6b | **Response:** Psalm 130:7bc
Gospel Acclamation: John 14:6
Gospel Reading: Luke 11:47–54
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

The readings today are about the wideness of God's mercy.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, in our first reading Saint Paul, writing to the Romans, speaks to a mixed community — some born Jewish, others Gentile. His task is delicate: to remind them that Christians remain heirs of God's promises to Abraham, yet are no longer bound by the old Law. Both Jew and Gentile, he says, have failed to keep God's commandments, but both can be saved — not by their own goodness, but by faith in the God who longs to save.

Paul draws on images his listeners would understand. For his Jewish brothers and sisters, he recalls the great Day of Atonement — *Yom Kippur* — when the high priest sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the altar and on the people as a sign of forgiveness and new life. Christ, he says, is now that sacrifice — the true place of mercy where humanity and God are reconciled. His words also reach the Gentiles, who may not know the rituals of the Temple, but who recognise the need for mercy. For them too, salvation comes not through law or lineage, but through simple trust in God's saving love revealed in Jesus Christ.

All of this shows us something beautiful about God. Our salvation is not a wage we earn, but a gift we receive. It is pure grace — love given freely, love that asks only to be trusted. This is the kind of faith that unites people who are very different, as the first Roman Christians were, and as we are today — a faith that goes deeper than law or culture or tribe.

The Psalmist gives voice to this same hope: "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord." It is the prayer of someone who knows that only mercy can lift them up. And it is also the prayer of many in our own land — people waiting for peace,

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for honest work, for fairness. In that waiting, we too are called to trust, to hold hope like a watchman waiting for the dawn.

In the Gospel, Jesus speaks strong words to the religious leaders. They build monuments to honour the prophets of old, but refuse to listen to the prophets of their own time. It is easy to honour truth once it feels safe and distant; much harder to hear it when it unsettles our comfort. They had the key of knowledge, Jesus says, but instead of opening doors, they locked them.

That warning reaches us too. Whenever we close our hearts to the voices of others — especially the poor, the young, and the wounded — we risk doing the same. Faith isn't about guarding the Good News; it's about letting the Good News change us, shape us, and send us out to love others.

In our Zimbabwean context, this might mean listening again to the cry of those whose voices are often ignored: the workers without wages, the students without opportunity, the families without enough food. The Church must never become a tomb where the living Word is silenced. It must always remain a home where truth and mercy meet.

Today we also remember Saint Hedwig and Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque. Both remind us what faith looks like when it is lived out in love. Hedwig, a duchess who became a religious, used her position to serve the poor. Margaret Mary showed the world the Sacred Heart of Jesus — a heart burning with compassion. Their lives echo Paul's message: holiness is not about keeping the rules, but about being transformed by love.

So as we pray today, we might ask quietly in our hearts:

- Where do I rely more on law than on grace?
- Who are the prophets in my own life I may be ignoring?
- How can I let God's mercy flow through me to those who most need hope today?

May the Lord open our hearts to His grace, that we may live not by boasting, but by love.

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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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