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Memorial of St Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and martyr

Date: Friday, October 17, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Romans 4:1–8
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 32:1b–2, 5, 11 | **Response:** Psalm 32:7
Gospel Acclamation: Psalm 33:22
Gospel Reading: Luke 12:1–7
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The hardest part of faith is not believing that God exists—but believing that He sees you, remembers you, and still delights in you.

The readings today speak with one voice: Abraham stepping into the unknown, the psalmist rejoicing in forgiveness, and Jesus urging his friends not to be afraid, for even the smallest sparrow is remembered by God.

In our first reading from the Letter to the Romans, Paul speaks of Abraham, the ancestor of faith. He wasn't made right with God because of what he did, but because he trusted God's promise. Paul uses a word from bookkeeping—reckoned (*logizomai*)—but he turns it on its head. This isn't a wage being paid, or a reward for good behaviour. It's a gift. Abraham trusted and had faith, and God called him righteous—not because he earned it, but because he opened his heart. Abraham's relationship with God was never based on achievement, but on trust. And that is good news for us. God's love cannot be bought or won—it is simply received.

This is important in our lives too. In Zimbabwe today, so many people carry heavy burdens. So many work hard and still go without. But the Gospel reminds us: God's love is not a reward for success. It is a gift. Faith doesn't mean we sit back and wait. It means we act—with courage, with hope, with trust that God is still at work, even when the road is hard.

The psalm today is a prayer of someone who has messed up and been forgiven. "Happy are those whose sins are forgiven." It reminds us that when we are honest with God, when we bring our failures and regrets to him, he doesn't turn

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away. He welcomes us back. God's mercy lifts us up. And joy returns.

In the Gospel Jesus speaks to his disciples. He warns them against hypocrisy—pretending to be something we're not. He says, "Nothing is hidden that will not be revealed." Truth matters. Living with integrity matters. But Jesus also reassures them: don't be afraid. God sees you. God cares about you. If he cares for even a little sparrow, how much more does he care for you? Even the hairs on your head are counted.

Jesus is inviting us to live truthfully and without fear. That can be hard, especially when speaking the truth might bring trouble. But Jesus says, be faithful. Be honest. Be courageous. And trust that you are not alone.

Saint Ignatius of Antioch lived this out. He was a bishop who was arrested and taken to Rome to be executed. On the way, he wrote letters to the Christian communities. He called himself the "wheat of God," ready to be ground by wild beasts so that he could become the bread of Christ. His words might sound dramatic, but they come from deep love. He trusted Jesus completely. He believed that even death would not separate him from Christ.

We might not face lions, but we do face struggles. We might feel tired, afraid, or unsure. Ignatius reminds us that we belong to Christ. And if we stay close to him, even in suffering, we can be a source of hope for others.

So today, let us be honest about where we are. Let us trust God with what we cannot control. Let us remember that we are seen, known, and loved.

Here are some questions to take into your prayer this morning:

- Where in my life is God inviting me to trust him more deeply?
- Is there a part of me that I hide from others or from God? What would it mean to bring it into the light?
- How can I turn my small daily struggles into something that helps others?

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.

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