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Thursday of the 30th Week in Ordinary Time

Date: Thursday, October 30, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Romans 8:31b–39
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 109:21–22, 26–27, 30–31 | **Response:** Psalm 109:26b
Gospel Acclamation: Luke 2:14, 19:38
Gospel Reading: Luke 13:31–35
Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

The readings today are about God's love that shelters us, a love that keeps reaching out even when we turn away, a love that never gives up.

Dear friends in Christ,

Sometimes we look at our lives and wonder: does anyone really see what I'm going through? Does anyone truly care? Today's readings give us a strong, clear answer: yes. God sees. God cares. And God is with us.

In the first reading, from the Letter to the Romans, St Paul speaks with deep conviction. He says, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Paul isn't speaking from comfort. He knew hardship. He had been imprisoned, beaten, and rejected. But he still believed, without doubt, that God's love cannot be taken away—not by suffering, not by danger, not even by death.

Paul reminds us that God did not hold back his own Son, Jesus. That's how far his love goes. And because of Jesus, we can never be separated from God. Not by fear. Not by failure. Not by pain. This love doesn't depend on our perfection. It depends on God's promise.

This truth means something powerful for us here in Zimbabwe in 2025. In a time when so many are struggling—with rising costs, with health challenges, with broken systems—we need to know we are not forgotten. God is not distant. He is close to those who suffer. And his love is steady even when everything else feels unstable.

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The psalm today is a cry from someone who is struggling. “I am poor and needy, and my heart is pierced within me.” Many of us know what that feels like. We know what it means to carry silent burdens—to worry about our families, to feel helpless in the face of poverty or injustice.

But the psalm ends with a promise. “The Lord stands at the side of the poor.” Not above them, not just watching, but standing with them. This is the heart of our faith—and of Catholic Social Teaching. God is on the side of those who suffer. And he invites us to be there too. As Church, as community, we are called to walk with those who are most in need—not from a distance, but shoulder to shoulder.

The Gospel from Luke brings us to a turning point in Jesus’ journey. The Pharisees come and warn him about Herod. But Jesus knows their warning is false. Herod isn’t really hunting him—not yet. The real threat is the city itself: Jerusalem, the place that has rejected prophet after prophet.

And yet, Jesus doesn’t respond with anger. He responds with sorrow. “Jerusalem, Jerusalem… How often have I longed to gather your children like a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.” This is one of the most tender images Jesus gives us. A hen—small, soft, not strong by the world’s standards—but fiercely protective. She spreads her wings to protect her young, even if it costs her life.

That is how Jesus loves. Not with force, but with courage. Not by pushing us, but by offering shelter. He doesn’t run away from danger. He chooses to walk towards Jerusalem, knowing what waits for him there. The cross does not take him by surprise. It is the path of love that he chooses freely.

And notice what he says: “Today and tomorrow I am healing… and on the third day I finish my work.” He speaks of his journey with quiet confidence. The phrase “third day” reminds us, of course, of the resurrection. Jesus knows where he is going, and what it will cost—but he also knows it will bring life.

This Gospel is full of longing. Jesus wants to protect. He wants to gather. But he cannot force us. He respects our freedom—even when it breaks his heart. Like Jerusalem, we sometimes say no to his love. We stay distant. We push him away. But he doesn’t give up. He waits. He weeps. And he calls again.

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There's something important here for our own lives. Many of us carry hidden wounds. We fear failure. We feel alone. We may think we are too broken to come to God. But today, Jesus tells us clearly: he wants to gather us close. Not to judge, but to heal.

In our country today, where so many carry heavy burdens—unpaid teachers, exhausted nurses, students without support, families going hungry—we must ask: are we helping to spread God's wings of protection? Are we, as Church, offering safety, dignity, and hope? Or are we adding to the fear and rejection?

In Ignatian prayer, St Ignatius encourages us to place ourselves inside the Gospel scene. So imagine it now. Picture yourself standing outside Jerusalem, as Jesus speaks. Hear the pain in his voice. Feel the longing in his words. See his open arms. What do you want to say to him? What does he want to say to you?

This is not just about the past. Jesus is still walking toward the places of suffering. He is still speaking to those who reject him. He is still spreading his wings over a broken world. And he is still waiting for us to come home.

So today, let us turn to him—not with fear, but with trust.

Let us be people who carry that same love into the world.
Let us be a Church that shelters the poor, defends the weak, and welcomes the rejected.
And let us trust that, even when all seems lost, nothing can separate us from the love of God.

As you pray this morning, I invite you to consider these questions:

- Where in my life have I felt God calling me closer—and have I been willing to respond?
- Who in my community is in need of protection, and how can I help offer that shelter?
- What is keeping me from resting under God's care—and am I ready to let go of it?

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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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