



Wednesday of the 31st Week in Ordinary Time



Date: Wednesday, November 5, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Romans 13:8–10

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 112:1b–2, 4–5, 9 | **Response:** Psalm 112:5a

Gospel Acclamation: 1 Peter 4:14

Gospel Reading: Luke 14:25–33

Preached at: the Chapel of Emmaus House in the Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe.

The readings today are about a kind of love that is measured not by feeling, but by what we are willing to give up for it. A love that asks for everything, and in the asking, reveals what really matters.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In his letter to the Romans St Paul speaks plainly: “Owe no one anything, except to love one another.” In a society built on systems of credit and debt, Paul is telling the early Christians in Rome—and us today—that the only lasting debt between people is the one that can never be fully paid: the duty to love.

But this love is not vague or sentimental. Paul immediately ties it to the commandments: do not kill, do not steal, do not commit adultery, do not covet. These aren’t just legal rules; they are signs of how we treat the people around us. Love, Paul says, does no harm to its neighbour. That is where love begins—not in warm emotions or good intentions, but in a deep commitment to avoid harm, to protect what is sacred in each person.

Here in Zimbabwe, we can see the harm that is done when love is absent. When those with power forget their duty to the common good. When public service becomes private gain. When families are torn apart by migration, not because people want to leave, but because they cannot afford to stay. Love means recognising the dignity of those around us and doing what we can to uphold it. Not in grand gestures, but in quiet, stubborn care.

Today's psalm paints a picture of someone who lives this way: someone who is "generous and lends," whose heart is "steady," who is not afraid. This kind of person is like a lamp lit in the dark—not because they can fix everything, but because they refuse to go along with injustice. Their strength comes not from wealth or status, but from trust in God. We know people like this. A grandmother who shares her last meal with a neighbour. A young teacher who stays in a broken system out of love for their students. A priest or sister who keeps showing up, day after day, even when the work feels too much. These are the just ones the psalm speaks of. Their lives are a quiet witness to the light.

Then in today's Gospel Jesus speaks to the crowds that have been following him. But instead of soft words, he offers a challenge. He says, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

Now, we must be careful here. Jesus is not calling us to reject or despise our families. In the language of the time, particularly in Semitic idiom, "to hate" meant something different than what it means for us. It meant to place second. To love less. Jesus is saying that if we want to follow him, we must be willing to put everything else second—including the people we hold dearest, and even our own plans, our own life—so that God's call comes first.

This is not about neglecting our families. It is about setting our compass. About choosing our first loyalty. Jesus is asking us to follow with both eyes open. To know what it will cost. He gives the image of someone building a tower, who first sits down to count the cost, or a king going to war who thinks carefully before acting. He's telling us: don't follow out of excitement or crowd-pressure. Know what you're choosing. Because following me will ask everything of you. And in giving everything, you'll find what really lasts.

In the Spiritual Exercises, St Ignatius asks us to consider what we are attached to. Not just possessions, but opinions, status, comforts—things we may cling to without realising they are keeping us from loving more freely. Jesus, in the Gospel, is calling us to be free. Not reckless, but free. To be able to say, "Even if I lose everything, I have not lost Christ."

Here in Zimbabwe, this may mean choosing integrity over survival, generosity over suspicion, truth over convenience. It may mean loving someone who cannot return the love. Or letting go of bitterness that has grown deep. Or turning down a benefit because you know it came through corruption. These are the real costs of discipleship today. They may not make the news, but they build the kingdom of God.

And this is not a message of despair. It is a message of hope. Because Jesus does not say, “Come and suffer.” He says, “Come and follow.” He walks the road ahead of us. He does not ask of us what he has not already given. And he gives us one another—the Church, the Eucharist, the poor among us—to help us remember what matters.

As we prepare to share in this Eucharist, let us bring our lives honestly before the Lord. Let us ask him to help us love with fewer conditions, to give with more freedom, and to follow him without delay.

And this morning, I invite you to take these questions into your prayer:

- Where in my life am I being called to love more deeply, even if it costs something?
- What do I need to let go of, in order to follow Jesus more freely?
- Am I willing to trust that the way of Christ—even when it is hard—is the way that leads to life?

Amen.

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-11nov-05-yc-ot-31/>

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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.