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Feast of All Saints and Blessed of the Dominican Order

Date: Friday, November 7, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Revelation 7:2–4, 9–14
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 24:1b–4b, 5–6 | **Response:** Psalm 24:6
Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 11:28
Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:1–12a
Preached at: the Chapel of Emerald Hill Children's Home **in the** Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe**.**

Sisters in Christ, today's solemnity draws us close to a mystery both vast and familiar—the communion of saints. It is the feast of those who have allowed grace to take flesh in their ordinary lives: the faithful ones who prayed, taught, healed, wept, and forgave until their hearts became transparent to God.

The Book of Revelation was written in a time when to follow Christ was to stand against the might of the Roman Empire. The early Christians were told to bow before the emperor's power, but they refused. They worshipped the Lamb, not Caesar. The vision we hear today—of a countless multitude robed in white—is not a dreamy escape from suffering. It is a cry of resistance and hope. Those robes are white not because their lives were pure from the start, but because they were washed in the blood of the Lamb. They did not give in to the empire's fear, violence, or greed. They clung to Christ's love, and so they became free.

You, my sisters, know something of that hidden resistance. Every act of teaching a child who cannot hear, every moment spent with an orphan who struggles to trust, is a quiet defiance of the world's indifference. You bear witness that every child has infinite worth, every life is capable of joy, every soul can be touched by grace. Your classrooms and care rooms are not far from that heavenly vision—they are its beginning on earth.

The Psalm asks, "Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?" and answers: those with clean hands and pure hearts. In your life of prayer and service, your hands are clean not because they are unsoiled, but because they are given. Your hearts are pure because they have been broken open by compassion. That is holiness—not perfection, but love made patient.

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In the Gospel, Jesus speaks the words that shape the heart of sainthood: the Beatitudes. He blesses those the world does not—those who hunger for justice, who make peace, who are gentle, who suffer for doing right. These are not rules to follow; they are a portrait of Christ Himself. The Beatitudes show us the face of God in the face of the poor, the mournful, the merciful. And notice how they end: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake." Here the Gospel meets the first reading. Those who resist evil with love, who bear the wounds of mercy, who keep the name of Jesus when others have turned away—these are the saints of God.

In our own time, the call to be peacemakers could not be more urgent. Zimbabwe, like so many places, groans under divisions of class, tribe, and politics. Yet the true peace Christ blesses is not the silence of the grave, but the harmony of justice. You, dear sisters, build that peace each time you teach the deaf child to sign her first prayer, each time you help the orphan discover that he is loved. You preach the Beatitudes not from a pulpit, but with your hands and hearts.

The second reading reminds us of our deepest truth: we are children of God. This identity cannot be taken by empire or poverty or illness. It is a seed that grows in secret. "What we shall be has not yet been revealed," St John says. Holiness is still unfolding in each of us. The saints we honour today were not born radiant; they became so, step by step, by choosing love over fear, service over self.

And in this year, as the Church rejoices in St John Henry Newman being named a Doctor of the Church, we are reminded that holiness also speaks through the mind. Newman believed that every person has a divine mission. Sisters, your mission is luminous: to teach minds and heal hearts until every child knows they are beloved of God.

When Jesus says in the Gospel Acclamation, "Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened," He speaks to you too. He knows the hidden weariness of love, the quiet tears shed after a long day. And He promises rest—not escape, but the deep peace of knowing that your work joins the song of the saints.

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So let us lift our eyes to that great multitude standing before the throne—men and women from every language and nation, including perhaps those children you once taught, now radiant in God's light. They wait for you. They cheer you on. And they remind us that holiness is not distant; it begins wherever love is stronger than fear.

And as you go back to your prayer, your teaching, your care, hold these questions in your heart:

- How might I resist the small empires of fear and indifference in my own heart?
- Where is Christ inviting me to be a peacemaker—in my community, my classroom, my prayer?
- Whose holiness am I privileged to witness each day, and how is God revealing Himself through them?

Lord, through the prayers of all your saints, known and unknown, give us clean hands and pure hearts. Teach us to make peace, to serve with joy, and to see your face in every child. 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.