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A homily for the Memorial of St Martin of Tours, bishop

Date: Tuesday, November 11, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Wisdom of Solomon 2:23–3

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 34:2–3, 16–19 | **Response:** Psalm 34:2a

Gospel Acclamation: John 14:23

Gospel Reading: Luke 17:7–10

Preached at: the Chapel of Emerald Hill Children’s Home in the Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe.

The readings today are about quiet, faithful service — the kind that gives without looking for thanks, that loves because it is right to love.

Dear sisters, in the first reading from the Book of Wisdom, we hear that “the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God.” The writer reminds us that even when good people suffer, they are never forgotten by God. What looks like loss to the world is often life in God’s eyes. You, who teach children, care for orphans, and pray for so many needs, live this truth every day. Much of what you do is unseen, but none of it is wasted. Each act of love, each lesson, each small kindness, builds the Kingdom quietly.

The psalm today continues that promise: “The Lord is close to the broken-hearted.” God’s closeness is not just a comfort; it is a calling. When you draw near to the poor, to children who are afraid or lonely, you draw near to God Himself. That is the heart of your vocation — to make the mercy of God visible through your gentleness and care.

In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of servants who, after a long day's work, say simply, "We are merely servants: we have done no more than our duty." It is a hard saying, but a freeing one. Jesus is not being cold. He is teaching that love does not need reward. Real disciples serve because their hearts belong to God. That is what gives peace — not applause, but knowing we are doing His will.

Saint Martin of Tours, whose feast we celebrate today, lived this Gospel beautifully. As a young soldier, he met a beggar freezing in the cold. He cut his cloak in half and covered the man. That night he saw Christ wearing the same torn cloak, saying, "Martin has clothed me." Later, as bishop, Martin continued to live simply and serve humbly. He cared for the poor, visited villages, and taught the faith with kindness.

Sisters, your life mirrors his. You share your time, your love, your patience with children who have no one else. You mend broken hearts, often with nothing more than a smile, a meal, or a quiet word. Like Saint Martin, you serve Christ in His most fragile disguise — in the poor, the sick, and the small.

This is also what Catholic Social Teaching reminds us: every person has dignity, and we are called to protect and lift up the weak. Here in Zimbabwe, where many still struggle to feed their families or find work, your witness speaks loudly. You show that God is close, that mercy is possible, that love can heal.

Saint Martin once prayed, "Lord, if your people still need me, I do not refuse the work; let your will be done." That can be our prayer too — not to seek comfort or reward, but to say, "Lord, keep me faithful in the work You have given me."

As we come to the Eucharist, we bring our small daily acts of love to the altar. Christ takes them, blesses them, and multiplies them — just as He did with the loaves and fishes.

And as you pray this morning, perhaps hold these questions in your heart:

- Where do I recognise Christ in the people I serve each day?
- What small act of kindness can I offer quietly this week?
- How can I keep my joy in serving, even when no one sees or thanks me?

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-11nov-11-yc-ot-32/>

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