



Friday of the 28th Week in Ordinary Time



Date: Friday, October 16, 2026 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** A

First Reading: Ephesians 1:11–14

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 33:1–2, 4–5, 12–13 | **Response:** Psalm 33:12

Gospel Acclamation: Psalm 33:22

Gospel Reading: Luke 12:1–7

Preached at: Our Lady of the Wayside Parish, Mount Pleasant in the Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe.

There is a striking contrast in today's Gospel. Jesus warns his disciples about hypocrisy and tells them that nothing hidden will remain concealed.

He speaks about persecution, suffering and even death. And yet, twice he tells them not to be afraid.

How do these things fit together?

I think the answer lies in the beautiful image Jesus gives us at the end of the Gospel: the sparrows. They were among the cheapest things one could buy in the marketplace. Yet Jesus tells us that not one of them is forgotten by God. And then he adds: "Even the hairs of your head are all numbered."

Jesus is reminding us that we are known and loved by God, even in the smallest details of our lives.

And perhaps that helps us understand his warning about hypocrisy. Sometimes we pretend to be something we are not because we are afraid: afraid of being judged, afraid of disappointing others, afraid that if people really knew us, they might think less of us. At other times, we simply prefer to protect our reputation rather than face the truth about ourselves. So we put on appearances. We hide our weaknesses, and sometimes even our wrongdoing.

But Jesus reminds us that there is no hiding from God. God already knows us completely. And God's love does not excuse our failings; rather, it gives us the courage to acknowledge them and to change.

Jesus also reminds his disciples that they may suffer for remaining faithful to the truth. He does not promise that following him will keep them safe from harm. Rather, he teaches them whose judgement matters most, and assures them that even in suffering they will never be forgotten by God.

In the first reading, St Paul reminds us that we have been chosen in Christ and marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit. Our deepest worth does not depend on the impression we make on others, or even on our achievements. It comes from belonging to God.

And that gives us a wonderful freedom: the freedom to live truthfully, without pretending to be better than we are, and without being afraid to acknowledge where we need to change. It also gives us the courage to stand by what is right, even when doing so comes at a cost.

Today we also remember two saints who show us something of what this means. St Hedwig, a duchess who devoted much of her life to caring for the poor and the sick, reminds us that our faith must be expressed in practical love. St Margaret Mary Alacoque, who helped spread devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, reminds us of the depth of God's love for each of us. And today is also World Food Day, which reminds us that millions of people still go hungry. If God does not forget even a single sparrow, how can we allow ourselves to forget those who struggle to find enough to eat? To know that we are loved by God is also to recognise that everyone else is loved by God too—and to act accordingly.

Perhaps today we might ask ourselves a simple question: Where in my life am I more concerned about how I appear to others than about who I really am before God?

For the God who calls us to live in the light is the same God who counts the hairs on our heads and never forgets even a single sparrow.

And that is why Jesus can say to us, with such tenderness: “Do not be afraid.”

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2026-10oct-16-ya-ot-28/>

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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.