



Commemoration of All the Departed of the Society of Jesus



Date: Thursday, November 6, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Romans 14:7–12

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 27:1b–e, 4, 13–14 | **Response:** Psalm 27:13

Gospel Acclamation: Matthew 11:28

Gospel Reading: Luke 15:1–10

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

The readings today are about belonging—to God, to one another, and to a communion that death cannot dissolve. They remind us that our lives are not our own possessions but part of a greater story of mercy. On this day when we remember all the departed of the Society of Jesus, we look not only backward with gratitude but forward with hope. The lives of those who have gone before us still speak; their faith continues to shape ours.

In the first reading from the Letter to the Romans, Saint Paul says, “None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.” He is writing to a community divided by small disputes—what to eat, what to observe—yet missing what matters most: that all life, every breath and action, is held in the Lord. The measure of a person is not found in achievement or reputation, but in direction: whether one’s life is turned toward God. That is what it means to live and die for the Lord.

This belonging is not abstract; it is lived in real places, through real relationships. The Jesuits we remember today—Fr Paul Brassil, Fr Horst Ulbrich, Fr Alexander Muyebe, Brothers Lawrence Makonora and Jonathan Chazura—each gave their lives in different ways, yet all shared the same compass: Christ. Some worked quietly; some bore heavy crosses; all trusted that their labour, seen or unseen, would serve the Kingdom. None lived or died alone. Their fraternity endures in the Body of Christ, whose memory we keep in this Eucharist.

The Psalm gives voice to that same trust: “I believe I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” It is the prayer of one who has seen trouble and still chooses hope. “One thing I ask,” says the psalmist, “to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” To dwell with the Lord is not only to

rest in heaven, but to live alert to His presence here—among the poor, in the classroom, the hospital, the village square. To wait for the Lord is not to stand idle; it is to persevere in faithfulness when nothing seems to move. In Zimbabwe today, amid economic strain and weariness, this kind of waiting is an act of courage. It is the patience that teaches, heals, plants, and prays when others give up.

In the Gospel Jesus tells two short parables: of a shepherd who leaves ninety-nine sheep to find the one that is lost, and of a woman who lights a lamp and sweeps her house until she finds a missing coin. The images are simple, but their depth is endless. Saint Gregory of Nyssa saw in the woman's lamp the light of human understanding, and in the lost coin the image of God buried within us. When we forget who we are, we must search for that image again—with light, with patience, with care. The woman's sweeping is not frantic; it is deliberate. It is the work of one who believes that what is lost is still worth finding.

Imagine that scene here: a woman in a township room, the light dim, power gone again, sweeping carefully until she finds what she has misplaced. Or a herdsman on the edge of the Matopos hills, searching the ravines for a single animal that wandered off. Each act speaks of love that refuses to give up. This is the love of God, but it is also the love we are asked to practise: a mercy that goes out, that risks, that refuses to write anyone off.

For us, this means learning to see as God sees—to notice who has been forgotten, who has fallen behind, who is missing from our tables. Catholic Social Teaching calls us to uphold the worth of every person, especially those whose dignity is most fragile. In a society where poverty, corruption, and migration erode community, we are called to be searchers and restorers: to bring back trust where it has been lost, to recover the coin of human dignity buried under the dust of neglect.

Saint Ignatius would invite us to enter these parables imaginatively. To stand with the shepherd and feel the roughness of the terrain, to hold the broom and sense the quiet persistence of the woman, to feel her joy when she finds what was lost. This is the Gospel lived inwardly. It is also the daily examen in practice—the light we bring into our own hearts to see where we have drifted, where grace still calls us home.

To live and die for the Lord, as Saint Paul writes, is to spend one's life in this patient search: for God, for others, for truth. The Jesuits we remember today lived that way. They were men who sought God in all things, who gave themselves without keeping score, who carried others quietly and faithfully. In their lives, we glimpse the Gospel enacted—not in grand gestures, but in steady, generous service.

And so we pray with the psalmist, “Be strong, let your heart take courage, and wait for the Lord.” Waiting not as withdrawal, but as readiness—to recognise, to respond, to be found.

Before we continue this Eucharist, let us hold in silence those we loved and those we have lost, trusting that they are not far from us, but alive in God.

Let's take these questions to our prayer:

- Where in my life today do I need to let God's searching light reveal what has been misplaced or neglected?
- Who around me is waiting to be found—not with words, but with compassion and action?
- How can I live these days so that, in small and quiet ways, my life says simply and truthfully: “I am the Lord's”?

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-11nov-06-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.