



Monday of the 30th Week in Ordinary Time



Date: Monday, October 27, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Romans 8:12–17

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 68:2, 4, 6–7b, 20–21 | **Response:** Psalm 68:21a

Gospel Acclamation: John 17:17ab

Gospel Reading: Luke 13:10–17

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

The readings today are about liberation — the liberation of creation, of the human body, and of the human heart. They speak of freedom from fear and from all that keeps us bowed down: sin, shame, and the slow corrosion of hope.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Saint Paul tells us in the Letter to the Romans that we are not debtors to the flesh — that is, not bound to the world's logic of self-preservation, rivalry, and fear. We belong instead to the Spirit, the breath of God that frees us to live as sons and daughters, not as slaves. When Paul writes that the Spirit makes us cry "Abba! Father!", he is not describing sentimentality but intimacy. "Abba" is the word Jesus himself used in his prayer at Gethsemane. It holds both reverence and trust — the cry of one who knows he is loved even in anguish. This Spirit, Paul says, bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, heirs with Christ. And what does an heir inherit? Not property, not privilege, but participation in the very life of God — a share in divine compassion and courage.

Psalm 68 sings that truth in the language of Israel's praise: "Our God is a God who saves; the Lord holds the keys of death." This is not just poetry. It is a declaration of divine character. God does not stand above human suffering; He stoops to deliver. The psalmist imagines the Lord as the defender of the orphan, the protector of the widow, the one who sets prisoners free and lets the poor rejoice. This is the heartbeat of God — mercy as movement, justice as joy.

We see that heartbeat incarnate in today's Gospel (Luke 13:10–17). Jesus meets a woman bent double for eighteen years. The text says she was crippled by "a spirit of infirmity" — in Greek, *pneuma astheneias*, literally "a breath of weakness." How powerful that image is: her very breath had been turned against her. She cannot lift her head. She sees only the dust at her feet. For nearly two decades she has been looked down upon, and she has lived looking down.

Jesus sees her. He calls her forward. Before she can even ask, he says, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." The word Luke uses, *apolelyzai*, means released, unchained — the same word used when slaves were manumitted or prisoners pardoned. When Jesus lays hands upon her, her body straightens, and she praises God.

But the ruler of the synagogue, bound himself by another kind of spirit — the spirit of control — protests. It is the Sabbath! Healing is forbidden! Jesus answers him not with anger but with clarity: "You hypocrites! Does not each of you untie his ox or donkey on the Sabbath and lead it to water? And ought not this daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be set free on the Sabbath day?" He argues from the *qal wahomer* — the rabbinic reasoning "from the light to the heavy": if you care for an animal on the Sabbath, how much more should you care for a child of God?

In that moment, Jesus restores more than her health. He restores her dignity, her place in the community, her image of God and of herself. The synagogue ruler speaks of rules; Jesus speaks of relationship. The law was made for life, not life for the law.

And here, in the dusty synagogue of an occupied land, a revolution begins — not of swords or slogans, but of sight. Eyes are opened to the truth that holiness is not withdrawal from the wounded but drawing near to them. That, brothers and sisters, is the essence of Christian freedom: not to do as we please, but to love as God loves.

In Zimbabwe today, we see many still bent low — under economic strain, political fatigue, and the quiet despair that comes when the cost of living rises faster than hope. The woman in the Gospel is not far from us. She lives in our town-

ships, in the mothers who carry the burden of family alone; she walks our streets, in the young man searching endlessly for work; she kneels in our pews, praying to stand tall again. To them, and to us, Jesus speaks: *You are set free.*

And freedom, as Saint Paul reminds us, comes with inheritance — with responsibility. To live as heirs of God's kingdom means to act with the same compassion we have received. To look at the bowed and ask: "What spirit has bound you, and how may I help loosen it?" Catholic Social Teaching names this truth plainly: every person bears an inviolable dignity; every structure that crushes it must be challenged. Whether it is unfair wages, corruption, or social indifference, the Christian cannot pass by. To be filled with the Spirit is to be moved — to rise, to act, to defend.

Ignatian spirituality calls this the movement of the heart: to see the world as God sees it, to discern where love is not yet loved, and to labour with Christ in the work of healing. Perhaps today the invitation is simple: to stand straight again. To let the Spirit of adoption, not the spirit of fear, guide our steps.

My friends, the Sabbath was made for rejoicing, and rejoicing begins when the bent are lifted. The Kingdom of God is not somewhere we escape to; it is something that unfolds whenever a child of God stands upright again. That is what Jesus came to begin — and what he entrusts to us to continue.

So let us ask ourselves, as we go forth into this week:

- Where in my life am I still bowed down — by fear, guilt, or habit — and how might I let Christ lay his hand upon me to set me free?
- Who around me is bent under a burden I have ignored — and what concrete act of compassion could I offer to help them stand tall?
- When I pray "Abba, Father," do I speak as a slave in fear, or as a child who knows he is loved and therefore sent to love?

May the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead straighten our backs, steady our hearts, and send us to set others free.

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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.