



7 September 2025

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year C

## NATIONAL CATECHETICAL MONTH

### *Born Free!*

Today's readings are heartwarming, particularly the story of Onesimus. He was a slave, but he was called, through the ministry of St Paul, to the glorious liberty of the children of God. Paul, ever the free man despite his imprisonment, exhorted Philemon to do the right thing and recognize the freedom to which, not only Onesimus, but all of us, are called to, by God's will and love!

We are born free! This is God's flawless and irrefutable design for us all.

Let this Sunday Eucharistic celebration, be not only a reminder, but a recognition on our part, along with a deep commitment, for us all to go on growing in freedom . . . to be free to love and to obey God's commands, cost what might.

It is not easy to love. That is why to love "the Jesus way" requires plenty of moral strength and a long apprenticeship. But this is the only way to be a real disciple of the Lord, for it is only through such a strong love that the Kingdom of God flourishes and we can attain authentic interior freedom.

Today, let us ask for the grace to love Jesus above all, both in words and deeds. On this first Sunday of September, let us remember that this is "National Catechetical Month." Let us offer this Eucharist for all those involved in the catechetical ministry and their recipients.



#### **INTRODUCTORY RITES**



##### **Entrance Antiphon**

*(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)*

**You are just, O Lord, and  
your judgment is right; treat  
your servant in accord with  
your merciful love.**

*(Ps 119 (118):137.124)*

##### **Greeting**

**P** –The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**All** – And with your spirit.

##### **Penitential Act**

**P** –Brethren, let us acknowledge our sins and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

**P** –You were sent to heal the contrite of heart, Lord, have mercy.

**All** – Lord, have mercy.

**P** –You came to call sinners, Christ, have mercy.

**All** – Christ, have mercy.

**P** –You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us, Lord, have mercy.

**All** – Lord, have mercy.

**P** –May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

**All** – Amen.

##### **Gloria**

**All** – Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have

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mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

### Collect (Opening Prayer)

**P** —O God, by whom we are redeemed and receive adoption, look graciously upon your beloved sons and daughters, that those who believe in Christ may receive true freedom and an everlasting inheritance.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

**All**—Amen.

### LITURGY OF THE WORD



**1st Reading** *Wis 9:13-18*  
Among the many things that we do not know are God's plans and will. It is only through the gift of divine Wisdom that we can overcome such limitation and be in a position to please God with our behavior.

**R** —A reading from the Book of Wisdom

**Who can know God's counsel, or who can conceive what the Lord intends? For the deliberations of mortals are timid, and unsure are our plans. For the corruptible body burdens the soul and the earthen shelter weighs down the mind that has many concerns. And scarce do we guess the things on earth, and what is within our grasp we find with difficulty. But when things are in heaven, who can search them out? Or who ever knew your counsel, except you had given Wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high?**

**And thus were the paths of those on earth made straight.**

The Word of the Lord.

**All**—Thanks be to God.

### Responsorial Psalm

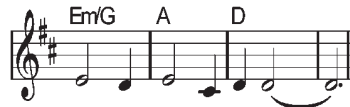
*Ps 90:3-4.5-6.12-13.14-17*

**R** —In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.

*R. M. Velez*



In ev'ry age, O Lord,



you have been our re-fuge!

\* **You turn man back to dust, saying, "Return, O children of men." For a thousand years in your sight are as yesterday, now that it is past, or as a watch of the night.**

**R.**

\* **You make an end of them in their sleep; the next morning they are like the changing grass, which at dawn springs up anew, but by evening wilts and fades.**

**R.**

\* **Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart. Return, O Lord! How long? Have pity on your servants!**

**R.**

\* **Fill us at daybreak with your kindness, that we may shout for joy and gladness all our days. And may the gracious care of the Lord our God be ours; prosper the work of our hands for us! Prosper the work of our hands!**

**R.**

**2nd Reading** *Phlm 9-10.12-17*  
Slavery was a black stain in all ancient societies. By emphasizing the reality of "universal brotherhood in the Lord," St. Paul lays the foundation for the abolition of all forms of enslavement.

**R** —A reading from the Letter of Paul to Philemon

**I, Paul, an old man, and now also a prisoner for Christ Jesus, urge you on behalf of my child Onesimus, whose father I have become in my imprisonment. I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. I should have liked to retain him for myself, so that**

he might serve me on your behalf in my imprisonment for the gospel, but I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that the good you do might not be forced but voluntary. Perhaps this is why he was away from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a brother, beloved especially to me; but even more so to you, as a man and in the Lord.

**So if you regard me as a partner, welcome him as you would me.**

The Word of the Lord.

**All**—Thanks be to God.

**Gospel Acclamation** *Ps 119:135*

**All**—Alleluia, alleluia.

**Let your face shine upon your servant;  
and teach me your laws.  
Alleluia, Alleluia.**

**Gospel** *Lk 14:25-33*

Using hyperbolic language, Jesus emphasizes the stern demands of authentic discipleship. If one wants to follow him faithfully, one has to be totally detached from even the closest relatives, one's self, and material possessions.

**P** —The Lord be with you.

**All**—And with your spirit.

**P** —A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

**All**—Glory to you, O Lord.

Great crowds were traveling with Jesus, and he turned and addressed them, "Whoever comes to me without turning one's back on one's father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even one's own life, he/she cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry one's own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion? Otherwise, after laying the foundation and finding himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers

should laugh at him and say, 'This one began to build but did not have the resources to finish.'

**Or what king marching into battle would not first sit down and decide whether with ten thousand troops he can successfully oppose another king advancing upon him with twenty thousand troops? But if not, while he is still far away, he will send a delegation to ask for peace terms.**

**In the same way, anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple."**

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### Homily

#### Profession of Faith

*(Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed)*

**All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.**

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, *(bow)\* and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.\** For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I

confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

#### Prayer of the Faithful

**P** —Today the Lord Jesus reminds us that, if we want to be His disciples, we must love Him more than everybody and everything else, and be ready to carry our cross with courage and patience, as we journey through life towards interior freedom. Let us now pray that we may all grow in freedom:

**All—Lord, help us grow in freedom.**

**C** —That the Church may be a shining example of freedom and unwavering faithfulness to the principles of the Gospel, and never compromise them for the sake of material gain, let us pray. **R.**

**C** —That many of our youth may freely accept the invitation of Jesus to follow Him with undivided hearts and to serve the marginalized, the homeless, the oppressed, and the sick, let us pray. **R.**

**C** —That those who have consecrated themselves to God in the priesthood or the religious life may be faithful to their promises until death, let us pray. **R.**

**C** —That our community may ever grow in freedom and become a shining example of faithfulness to the teaching of Jesus in a society full of corruption and materialism, let us pray. **R.**

**P** —Lord Jesus, You are our only treasure, our hope, and our life. Grant us the grace to remain faithful to You in all circumstances of life that we may enter the Kingdom where You live and love for ever and ever.

**All—Amen.**

#### LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



#### Preparation of the Gifts

**P** —Pray, brethren . . .

**All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the**

**praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

#### Prayer over the Offerings

**P** —O God, who give us the gift of true prayer and of peace, graciously grant that, through this offering, we may do fitting homage to your divine majesty and, by partaking of the sacred mystery, we may be faithfully united in mind and heart.

Through Christ our Lord.

**All—Amen.**

#### Preface IV

**P** —The Lord be with you.

**All—And with your spirit.**

**P** —Lift up your hearts.

**All—We lift them up to the Lord.**

**P** —Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All—It is right and just.**

**P** —It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For by his birth he brought renewal to humanity's fallen state, and by his suffering, canceled out our sins; by his rising from the dead he has opened the way to eternal life, and by ascending to you, O Father, he has unlocked the gates of heaven.

And so, with the company of Angels and Saints, we sing the hymn of your praise, as without end we acclaim:

**All—Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

#### Memorial Acclamation

**P** —The mystery of faith.

**All—We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.**

#### COMMUNION RITE



**All—Our Father . . .**

**P** –Deliver us, Lord . . .

**All**–For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

### Sign of Peace

### Breaking of the Bread

**All**–Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us. (2×)

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.**

### Communion

**P** –Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**All**–Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

### Communion Antiphon

*(To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.)*

Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God; my soul is thirsting for God, the living God.

*Cf. Ps 42 (41):2-3*

### Prayer after Communion

**P** –Grant that your faithful, O Lord, whom you nourish and endow with life through the food of your Word and heavenly Sacra-

ment, may so benefit from your beloved Son's great gifts that we may merit an eternal share in his life.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**All**–Amen!

## CONCLUDING RITES



**P** –The Lord be with you.

**All**–And with your spirit.

**P** –May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**All**–Amen.

**P** –Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

**All**–Thanks be to God.

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# BORN TO BE FREE!

*Kalakbay at Katoto*

There is something heartwarming in today's readings, particularly in Paul's letter to Philemon (2<sup>nd</sup> reading). Paul, by then an old man in prison, waxes paternal and solicitous for the welfare of both Philemon and the run-away slave Onesimus. As the law would prescribe, Paul sends him right back to Philemon, but not before liberating both the master and the slave. Philemon may well have been a slave to the prevailing culture of that time that considered slavery normal. Onesimus, may well have been, not only a physical slave, but also – and more importantly – a slave to his own misconceptions about himself and his relationship with the rest of the world, including his master, Philemon.

**Paul, an old man shackled in prison, bound by the dictates of an earthly law that he has spent so much time and effort enlightening people about, gives Philemon, Onesimus, and the whole believing world for posterity, a great lesson on personal deliverance, freedom, and total human liberation.**

In hotly contested athletic competitions (or any competition for that matter), it is so tempting for any athlete to go for drugs as much as he/she goes for gold. Where everyone cheers and eggs them on to be “*swifter, higher, stronger*,” athletes can really be tempted to fall slaves to dopes and drugs, slaves to the idea of victory at all costs, enslaved by lies, even as they bask under the glow of fame and – for some – fortune. But in this same arena awash in potential cheating of all kinds, there appear, time and time again, shining examples of values that proclaim the dazzling beauty of liberating truth, and the interior glow of honesty, good, clean, hard and honest work, and the rare flash of magnanimity that comes from the most unexpected players.

**But let us be honest . . . in life then and now, honest self-respecting persons abound in all aspects of our societal lives.** Who says interior freedom is no longer in vogue? Who says that the liberating power of moral truth is no longer relevant?

Recently, we have been awed by stories of humble ride-hailing company drivers going out of their way to either bring their clients home despite the floods, the monstrous traffic jams even to the point of losing an overnight

sleep to do their part of the agreement. Or who among us was not touched by that airport janitor who returned a big sum of money to a distraught traveler who lost sight of his prized possessions?

We live in a world dotted with Olympic-sized challenges all over. They may not have to do with material gold and glittering medallions. **But these moral challenges have to do with what matters, what counts, and what is most important in the long run.** They have to do with treasures which no moth or rust can destroy. And like the coveted Olympic gold, or the gospel's “pearl of great price,” they call on us to give our best, to do our utmost, and to plan ahead.

**Today, the liturgy teaches us that, outside of athletic and other competitions, the moral challenges of daily life go on. The call to genuine interior liberation goes on.** And examples both from Scriptures and daily life in our times are never wanting. These are examples of people, who, while physically challenged like Paul in prison, nevertheless come out interiorly free. These are examples of people who have chosen heavenly “wisdom” over earthly and material cunningness and skills. They have chosen mystery over mastery, ever ready and willing to be guided by the ineffable counsel from above: “*Who can know God's counsel or who can conceive what the Lord intends? ... Or who ever knew your counsel, except you had given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high?*”

In the greater and bigger arena that is the world and life in its fullness, victory lies, not so much on those who excel in physical powers, but on those who have understood that **what counts in the long run, is the freedom that comes from above, the freedom that is both a test and a trust – a gift and a responsibility.** This is the gift of Christian, interior freedom that comes with the very nature of our being human, created as we are unto God's image and likeness.

**Born to be free, humans like us, are called to ever deeper, ever broader, and ever more liberating freedom.** Onward, then, Christian soldiers to the fight of our lifetimes! Swifter, higher, stronger!

(This serves as entrance ticket for the MIBF 2025.) Please cut and present at the gate.

## PRAYER OF THE CATECHISTS

Almighty Father,  
We, your catechists, pray to You:  
Bless us and make us holy.  
In our confused and restless world,  
You have chosen us  
to be echoes of Your Word.

Lord Jesus,  
Unite us more and more to you,  
for we are Yours.  
May we constantly draw  
from the Paschal Mystery  
a great concern for the salvation of the world.

Come Holy Spirit,  
our Light and our Guide,  
Be with us always.  
May we bring love,  
for the people of our times,  
by being echoes of Your love.

Mary, Mother and Model of catechists,  
Keep us faithful to our calling.  
Like you, may we ponder the Word of God in our hearts,  
and live according to our Faith  
as you did.  
San Lorenzo Ruiz,  
pray for us, catechists of today.  
Amen.

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