

## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Give peace, O Lord, to those who wait for you, that your prophets be found true. Hear the prayers of your servant, and of your people Israel.

## PENITENTIAL ACT

You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

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

May almighty God have mercy on us... Amen.

## THE GLORIA

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 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.

## OPENING PRAYER

Look upon us, O God, Creator and ruler of all things, and, that we may feel the working of your mercy, grant that we may serve you with all our heart. Through our Lord Jesus Christ....

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

### FIRST READING Ecclesiasticus 27: 30 - 28:7

#### A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus

Resentment and anger, these are foul things, and both are found with the sinner.

He who exacts vengeance will experience the vengeance of the Lord, who keeps strict account of sin.

Forgive your neighbour the hurt he does you, and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven.

If a man nurses anger against another, can he then demand compassion from the Lord? Showing no pity for a man like himself, can he then plead for his own sins?

Mere creature of flesh, he cherishes resentment; who will forgive him his sins?

Remember the last things, and stop hating, remember dissolution and death, and live by the commandments.

Remember the commandments, and do not bear your neighbour ill-will;

remember the covenant of the Most High, and overlook the offence.

**The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.**

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps. 102:1-4, 9-12

**R. The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy.**

1. My soul, give thanks to the Lord, all my being, bless his holy name. My soul, give thanks to the Lord and never forget all his blessings.

2. It is he who forgives all your guilt, who heals every one of your ills, who redeems your life from the grave, who crowns you with love and compassion.

3. His wrath will come to an end; he will not be angry for ever. He does not treat us according to our sins nor repay us according to our faults.

4. For as the heavens are high above the earth so strong is his love for those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west so far does he remove our sins.

## SECOND READING Romans 14: 7 - 9

### A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord. This explains why Christ both died and came to life, it was so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

**The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia! I give you a new commandment: love one another, just as I have loved you, says the Lord. Alleluia!**

## GOSPEL Matthew 18: 21 - 35

### A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.

Peter went up to Jesus and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times.'

'And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; but he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet. "Give me time" he said "and I will pay the whole sum." And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt. Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him. "Pay what you owe me" he said. His fellow servant fell at his feet and implored him, saying, "Give me time and I will pay you." But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt. His fellow servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole



# focus on sunday

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME 17th September 2023

Through Christ's own blood we have been forgiven. We did not earn this forgiveness - it is God's gift to us. We in return must forgive in the same way - not with strings attached, not once only, but unconditionally, freely and always.

*Forgive your brother from your heart.*



[R] affair to him. Then the master sent for him. " You wicked servant," he said " I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you? And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart.

[R] **The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## NICENE CREED

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,

**All bow for following three lines:**

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.

## AFTER THE CONSECRATION

**The mystery of faith. We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.**



The parable is a story with Eastern exaggerations but it's making the point - about how God treats us; always forgiving.

It's hard sometimes to accept the forgiveness of God and that's what confession is about. No matter what we did, or how we feel about what we have done, God forgives. His nature is to be merciful.

The story is about us too - a man is forgiven a lot and then doesn't forgive a neighbour. It is hard to forgive: you may be cheated by the banks or the pension scheme; or be a victim of abuse or bullying; cheated of a place for your child in a school; let down by your partner in big or small ways, receive harsh treatment in religious life; we can carry hurts forever. But we can pray a forgiveness prayer and try to let the big forgiveness of God enter our hearts and it can happen gradually.

Some hurts and burdens are heavy to carry through life. To forgive can release some of that weight. The person who hurt us may be dead or may not even know (or care) that we are hurting. When we desire to forgive but don't know how; one way of looking for this strength is to pray for it. When we pray we are praying to be forgiving people! Sitting with the crucified Jesus can lighten the burden as we know Jesus loves and wants to forgive us all. Jesus has a lot to forgive - death while innocent, betrayed, let down. He got through it!

We can thank God for God's forgiveness; and for the times I could let go, and for times I was forgiven. And we know we are invited with God's help into the bright fragrant world of forgiveness.

Donal Neary SJ (Editor, Sacred Heart Messenger)