



Hosanna



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24TH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Year A

The Spirit of Forgiveness. Mt 18/21-35

INTRODUCTION

To forgive is to accept and acknowledge the other without any record of his or her mistakes. The attitude of forgiveness must be total as Jesus does it before performing any miracle. We should not make any conditions and boundary to forgive one's sins. Dear brothers and sisters, our enemies are not those who hate us rather those whom we hate. Forging one's enemy is not easy. It is human to forgive his enemy despite his bad nature. Therefore, let us meditate on how God is merciful to us in spite of our shortcomings.

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. (*Sir 36:18*)

COLLECT

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, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING

Today's first reading speaks about the attitude of forgiveness. We must think of doing what is due to the Lord. This

would mean that one has to live the life of dedication and love. Because, Jesus lived as a model of love and forgiveness.

A Reading from the Book of Sirach 27:30–28:7

Anger and wrath, these are abominations, and the sinful man will possess them. He that takes vengeance will suffer vengeance from the Lord, and he will firmly establish his sins. Forgive your neighbour the wrong he has done, and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray. Does a man harbour anger against another, and yet seek for healing from the Lord? Does he have no mercy toward a man like himself, and yet pray for his own sins? If he himself, being flesh, maintains wrath, who will make expiation for his sins? Remember the end of your life, and cease from enmity, remember destruction and death, and be true to the commandments. Remember the commandments, and do not be angry with your neighbour; remember the covenant of the Most High, and overlook ignorance.

The Word of the Lord Responsorial Psalm (102)

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

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.

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

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.

R/ The Lord is compassion and

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.

R/ The Lord is compassion and

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.

R/ The Lord is compassion and

SECOND READING

Paul in his letter to the Romans instructs people that 'life is a journey starts from God and ends in God'. In this journey, we have to live for God and work for the accomplishment of his redemptive work. This accomplishment demands one own life. We must learn to sacrifice our life as our master did.

A reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Romans 14:7-9

None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

The Word of the Lord

ALLELUIA

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

My sheep hear my voice, says the

Lord; I know them and they follow me.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL READING

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Matthew 18:21-35

Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, till he should pay all his debt. So also my

heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

The Gospel of the Lord

HOMILY

NICENE CREED

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrant: Dear friends, our loving God is generous beyond our imagination. Let us, therefore bring before Him all our heart’s desires and ask Him to bless us.

LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER

1. Lord, bless our Pope Francis, our Archbishop and all the leaders of the church that they may continually share the riches of God’s word to all. *Let us pray.*

2. Lord, we pray for our beloved Archbishop Bernard Moras, who celebrates today the 13th Anniversary of assuming the leadership of our Archdiocese. Grant him energy and strength to lead the flock towards your heavenly kingdom more and more successfully. *Let us pray.*

3. Lord, we pray for our brothers and sisters of other churches that they may find in the Eucharist the power to effect the change. *Let us pray.*

4. Lord, we pray for all those who have given up the Church and the Sacraments. Bless them that they may once again discover the meaning of God’s selfless giving. *Let us pray.*

Celebrant: God our most loving Father, we thank you for the gracious gift of the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. Having received so great gift we trust that you will give everything else as well. We make our prayer through the same Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

May this oblation, O Lord, which on the altar of the Cross cancelled the offence of the whole world, cleanse

us, we pray, of all our sins. Through Christ our Lord.

PREFACE I (Ordinary)

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 through his Paschal Mystery, he accomplished the marvellous deed, by which he has freed us from the yoke of sin and death, summoning us to the glory of being now called a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for your own possession, to proclaim everywhere your mighty works, for you have called us out of darkness into your own wonderful light.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

All: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

How precious is your mercy, O God! The children of men seek shelter in the shadow of your wings. (*Ps 35:8*)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the working of this heavenly gift, O Lord, we pray, take possession of our minds and bodies, so that its effects, and not our own desires, may always prevail in us. Through Christ our Lord.

REFLECTION

Prior to this episode, Jesus was talking to his disciples about fraternal correction. When the discourse on fraternal correction over, St Peter began another episode on forgiveness. Peter’s concern was to ask Jesus whether forgiveness is limited. Peter generously took the number to 7. “Can I forgive my brother and his wrong seven times?” But the answer of Jesus was very clear. He said there

is no limit for forgiveness; it cannot be measured in numbers. It should spring from the heart and flows generously. When Peter said “up to seven times”. Jesus answered “seventy times seven”. Jesus meant an unconditional forgiveness. Because the art of forgiveness flows from the heart and not from the mind. If it flows from mind, the mind keeps the record of the wrongs. But it flows from the heart freely without measure. Love, Mercy, Joy, Peace and forgiveness flow from heart without measure. A good Christian will wait for the opportunity to love and to forgive. In other words, forgiveness is an act of the spirit. As the spirit flows without measure, the act of the spirit also flows without measure. A good relationship does not keep the account of wrong doings. It creates an opportunity to establish the values of Love, Forgiveness and Mercy. These values, not only strengthen the relations but rejuvenate the bond between the people. The forgiveness should flow because everyone are sinners. Every one commit mistakes. Most often, the offence in a good relationship is unintentional or unknown. If some hold the grudge and commit an offence he/she falls short of good relationship. The offence is common to all. The amount of people that offend us is the amount we offend others. Therefore, offence is common in a relationship, as long as there is a human relationship. There are chances of offences. It is important to keep the relationship good and united. The immediate

response to an offence is revenge, isolation, back biting, and seeking self-pity with an unforgiving heart. Justification may be another way of exhibiting the unforgiving heart. At times, people say that they can forgive but cannot forget the wrong. If anyone cannot forget the wrong, how can he / she forgive the wrong? Or how can he / she love the wrong doer? It may be impossible to forgive and love the wrong doer.

An unforgiving person is not matured. He is self-centered and not worthy of the mercy of God. One of the most precious institutions of Jesus is the sacrament of confession. The sacrament of confession invites the penitent to experience the mercy of God. God forgives the sins of the penitent. Anyone who enjoys the mercy of God in the confessional, have the obligations to share the same when he/she walks out of confession. If he/she fails to show mercy to his / her friend, it is clear that the person has not experienced the mercy of God. When Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, He taught ‘Our Father’. In that prayer, he included the element of forgiveness. “Forgive me as I forgive those who sin against me”. It is to declare that at the failure to forgive the sins of others, he/she is requesting God not to forgive. It also means that the cross, Suffering, death, resurrection and salvation is nothing for the person. Therefore, Forgiveness becomes the basis for one’s salvation.

- Rev. Fr. Arockiaswamy Sebastian

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