

# Sunday, September 13, 2020

## Lectionary 24, Year A

### Introduction

In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ was lifted high upon the cross so that he might draw the whole world to himself. To those who look upon the cross, grant your wisdom, healing, and eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### First Reading: Genesis 50:15-21

*After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.*

<sup>15</sup>Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" <sup>16</sup>So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, <sup>17</sup>'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. <sup>18</sup>Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." <sup>19</sup>But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup>Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to

preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. <sup>21</sup>So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.” In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

**Psalm: Psalm 103:1-13**

*LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy. (Ps. 103:8)*

- <sup>1</sup>Bless the LORD, | O my soul,  
and all that is within me, bless God’s | holy name.
- <sup>2</sup>**Bless the LORD, | O my soul,**  
**and forget not | all God’s benefits—**
- <sup>3</sup>who forgives | all your sins  
and heals all | your diseases;
- <sup>4</sup>**who redeems your life | from the grave**  
**and crowns you with steadfast | love and mercy; R**
- <sup>5</sup>who satisfies your desires | with good things  
so that your youth is renewed | like an eagle’s.
- <sup>6</sup>**O LORD, you provide | vindication**  
**and justice for all who | are oppressed.**
- <sup>7</sup>You made known your | ways to Moses  
and your works to the chil- | dren of Israel.
- <sup>8</sup>**LORD, you are full of compas- | sion and mercy,**  
**slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love; R**
- <sup>9</sup>you will not al- | ways accuse us,  
nor will you keep your an- | ger forever.
- <sup>10</sup>**You have not dealt with us according | to our sins,**  
**nor repaid us according to | our iniquities.**
- <sup>11</sup>For as the heavens are high a- | bove the earth,  
so great is your steadfast love for | those who fear you.
- <sup>12</sup>**As far as the east is | from the west,**  
**so far have you removed our transgres- | sions from us.**
- <sup>13</sup>As a father has compassion | for his children,  
so you have compassion for those who fear | you, O LORD. **R**

## **Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35**

*When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.*

<sup>21</sup>Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

<sup>23</sup>“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup>and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ <sup>29</sup>Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”