

“As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn’t leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I’d still be in prison.”

- Nelson Mandela



24th Sunday, Ordinary Time, Year A

We are still unable to gather, yet as faith-filled disciples of the Lord, we are in communion with each other. For we can take up the same scriptures as do disciples of the Lord throughout the world. We can be united in prayer and feel the presence of each other together with Jesus of Nazareth.

Now is an opportunity to again spend some alone, or with others in our household/bubble, and pray with the scriptures.

Take some time to be quiet. Take some time to remember others who you would like to remember before the Lord. Give voice to their names, and their need.

Take time to listen to a hymn or song that came to mind when you prepared with scriptures that are set down by the Church for today.

Take time to call upon mercy of God and pray in thanks for God’s presence. Enter a time of reading/listening to the Word, noting what words or phrases appeal to you or have an impact on you. Take time for prayers of thanksgiving. Take time with the Lord, with yourself, with family... take time!

CHILDRENS RESOURCES are included following the Scriptures below.

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

SIR 27:30—28:7

Wrath and anger are hateful things,
yet the sinner hugs them tight.
The vengeful will suffer the LORD's vengeance,
for he remembers their sins in detail.
Forgive your neighbour's injustice;
then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven.
Could anyone nourish anger against another
and expect healing from the LORD?
Could anyone refuse mercy to another like himself,
can he seek pardon for his own sins?
If one who is but flesh cherishes wrath,
who will forgive his sins?
Remember your last days, set enmity aside;
remember death and decay, and cease from sin!
Think of the commandments, hate not your neighbour;
remember the Most High's covenant, and overlook faults.

PS 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12

R. (8) The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in compassion.

Bless the LORD, O my soul;
and all my being, bless his holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in compassion.

He pardons all your iniquities,
heals all your ills.

He redeems your life from destruction,
crowns you with kindness and compassion.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in compassion.

He will not always chide,
nor does he keep his wrath forever.

Not according to our sins does he deal with us,
nor does he requite us according to our crimes.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in compassion.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so surpassing is his kindness toward those who fear him.

As far as the east is from the west,
so far has he put our transgressions from us.

R. The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in compassion.

ROM 14:7-9

Brothers and sisters:

None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself.

For if we live, we live for the Lord,
and if we die, we die for the Lord;

so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

For this is why Christ died and came to life,
that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

MT 18:21-35

Peter approached Jesus and asked him,

"Lord, if my brother sins against me,
how often must I forgive?

As many as seven times?"

Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.

That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king
who decided to settle accounts with his servants.

When he began the accounting,

a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount.

Since he had no way of paying it back,

his master ordered him to be sold,

along with his wife, his children, and all his property,

in payment of the debt.

At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said,

'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.'

Moved with compassion the master of that servant

let him go and forgave him the loan.
When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants
who owed him a much smaller amount.
He seized him and started to choke him, demanding,
'Pay back what you owe.'
Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him,
'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'
But he refused.
Instead, he had the fellow servant put in prison
until he paid back the debt.
Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened,
they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master
and reported the whole affair.
His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant!
I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to.
Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant,
as I had pity on you?'
Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers
until he should pay back the whole debt.
So will my heavenly Father do to you,
unless each of you forgives your brother from your heart."

Reflecting with Children

During this time when we are apart from each other on Sundays, maybe some families may like to come together for coffee or such like. In the midst of being together the link below may give some ideas on how to help children reflect on the Scriptures, God's Word, which the Church is reflecting on this weekend.

Please go to this link for resources to help your children reflect on God's Word.

<https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Ordinary-Time-24th-Sunday-Year-A.pdf>

Reflection on the Gospel—24th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year

A

(Matthew 18:21-35)

Commentary by St Augustine of Hippo

“The Lord puts the parable of the unforgiving debtor before us that we may learn from it. He has no desire for us to die, so he warns us: “This is how your heavenly Father will deal with you if you, any of you, fail to forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Take notice now, for clearly this is no idle warning. The fulfilment of this command calls for the most vigorous obedience. We are all in debt to God, just as other people are in debt to us. Is there anyone who is not God’s debtor? Only a person in whom no sin can be found. And is there anyone who has no brother or sister in his debt? Only if there be someone who has never suffered any wrong.

And so, every day we pray; every day we beat upon God’s ears with our pleas;

Do you think anyone can be found in the entire human race who has not in turn wronged another in some way, incurring a debt to that person? No, all are debtors, and have others in debt to them. Accordingly, God who is just has told you how to treat your debtor, because he means to treat his in the same way.

There are two works of mercy which will set us free. They are briefly set down in the gospel in the Lord’s own words: “Forgive and you will be forgiven and give, and you will receive.” (Mt 6:14) The former concerns pardon, the latter generosity.

As regards pardon he says: “Just as you want to be forgiven, so someone is in need of your forgiveness.” Again, as regards generosity, consider when a beggar asks you for something that you are a beggar too in relation to God.

When we pray, we are all beggars before God. We are standing at the door of a great householder, or rather, lying prostrate, and begging with tears. We are longing to receive a gift—the gift of God himself.

What does a beggar ask of you? Bread. And you, what do you ask of God, if not Christ, who said: "I am the living bread that has come down from heaven"? Do you want to be pardoned? Then pardon others. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Do you want to receive? Give and you will receive.

If we think of our sins, reckoning up those we have committed by sight, hearing, thought, and countless disorderly emotions, I do not know whether we can even sleep without falling into debt.

And so, every day we pray; every day we beat upon God's ears with our pleas; every day we prostrate ourselves before him saying: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we also forgive those who trespass against us."

Which of our trespasses, all of them or only some? All, you will answer.

Do likewise, therefore, with those who have offended you.

This is the rule you have laid down for yourself, the condition you have stipulated. When you pray according to this pact and covenant you remember to say: "Forgive us, as we also forgive our debtors."

(Sermon 83, 2. 4: PL 38, 515-516)

Augustine (354-430) was born at Thagaste in Africa and received a Christian education, although he was not baptized until 387. In 391 he was ordained priest and in 395 he became coadjutor bishop to Valerius of Hippo, whom he succeeded in 396. Augustine's theology was formulated in the course of his struggle with three heresies: Manichaeism, Donatism, and Pelagianism. His writings are voluminous and his influence on subsequent theology immense. He molded the thought of the Middle Ages down to the thirteenth century. Yet he was above all a pastor and a great spiritual writer.