

SUNDAY GOSPEL BIBLE SHARING



Wednesday September 13th for the 24nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

OPENING PRAYER : Merciful God, in today's readings, you challenge us to forgive life's hurts and not bottle them up in our heart. You forgive us over and over. Help us to offer the same forgiveness to others. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL

- In the words of Saint Benedict, "Listen with the ears of your heart."
- Please note a word, phrase, or verse that seemed to really catch your notice.
- A volunteer slowly read aloud today's passage Afterwards, we have a few minutes of silent reflection.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Matthew 18:21-35

21 Peter approached Jesus and asked him,

"Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive? As many as seven times?"

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

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

24 When he began the accounting,

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

25 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.

26 At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.'

27 Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan.

28 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.'

29 Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him,

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

30 But he refused.

Instead, he had the fellow servant put in prison until he paid back the debt.

31 Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair.

32 His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to.

33 Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?'

34 Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt.

35 So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives your brother from your heart.'

* [18:1–35] This discourse of the fourth book of the gospel is often called the “church order” discourse, but it lacks most of the considerations usually connected with church order, such as various offices in the church and the duties of each, and deals principally with the relations that must obtain among the members of the church. Beginning with the warning that greatness in the kingdom of heaven is measured not by rank or power but by childlikeness (Mt 18:1–5), it deals with the care that the disciples must take not to cause the little ones to sin or to neglect them if they stray from the community (Mt 18:6–14), the correction of members who sin (Mt 18:15–18), the efficacy of the prayer of the disciples because of the presence of Jesus (Mt 18:19–20), and the forgiveness that must be repeatedly extended to sinful members who repent (Mt 18:21–35).

* [18:21–35] The final section of the discourse deals with the forgiveness that the disciples are to give to their fellow disciples who sin against them. To the question of Peter how often forgiveness is to be granted (Mt 18:21), Jesus answers that it is to be given without limit (Mt 18:22) and illustrates this with the parable of the unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23–34), warning that his heavenly Father will give those who do not forgive the same treatment as that given to the unmerciful servant (Mt 18:35). Mt 18:21–22 correspond to Lk 17:4; the parable and the final warning are peculiar to Matthew. That the parable did not originally belong to this context is suggested by the fact that it really does not deal with repeated forgiveness, which is the point of Peter’s question and Jesus’ reply.

* [18:22] Seventy-seven times: the Greek corresponds exactly to the LXX of Gn 4:24. There is probably an allusion, by contrast, to the limitless vengeance of Lamech in the Genesis text. In any case, what is demanded of the disciples is limitless forgiveness.

* [18:24] A huge amount: literally, “ten thousand talents.” The talent was a unit of coinage of high but varying value depending on its metal (gold, silver, copper) and its place of origin. It is mentioned in the New Testament only here and in Mt 25:14–30.

* [18:26] Pay you back in full: an empty promise, given the size of the debt.

* [18:28] A much smaller amount: literally, “a hundred denarii.” A denarius was the normal daily wage of a laborer. The difference between the two debts is enormous and brings out the absurdity of the conduct of the Christian who has received the great forgiveness of God and yet refuses to forgive the relatively minor offenses done to him.

* [18:34] Since the debt is so great as to be unpayable, the punishment will be endless.

* [18:35] The Father’s forgiveness, already given, will be withdrawn at the final judgment for those who have not imitated his forgiveness by their own.

Thoughts and reflection on the Gospel Passage

QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

1. Share what verse or image in the readings caught your attention or drew you in. Was there a verse or aspect of the readings that challenged you?
2. What are the obstacles to forgiving others? Name as many obstacles as possible, e.g., pride, the belief that someone does not deserve mercy, hardness of heart, etc., then name the primary obstacle that you may face in forgiving a hurt.
3. What helps you to forgive life’s hurts? What might help you to overcome whatever you name as the primary obstacle to forgiving life’s hurts?
4. Name one thing today’s Gospel says to us that we disciples of Jesus need to heed and act on.

Commentary

The Gospel opens with Peter seeking to place a limit on how often he must forgive someone who offends him over and over. Surely, forgiving someone seven times should be enough. But Jesus disagrees, saying he should forgive not seven times but seventy times seven. In other words, Jesus puts no limit on forgiveness. 14 To illustrate his point further, Jesus tells a parable, often called the kingdom parable because he tells how things are to be in the new kingdom that he is inaugurating. In the parable, the king stands for God, and the servant stands for all of us. The king shows great mercy to the servant who owes a huge debt. The expectation is that the forgiven servant will also show mercy to the one who owes him much less. When this does not happen, the king (representing God) is not happy. The parable grounds forgiveness in the nature of God. We are to heed the intent of the parable at its conclusion: it solemnly warns us that we must fervently pray for

strength to resist the temptation to get even with those who have hurt us, and pray for the grace to reflect the majestic generosity of the Kingdom of God.

IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?

IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?

CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer

Bible Sharing Room 5 and Zoom

Starting Sept 13 from 6:30 – 7:30 pm EST Weekly on Wednesday
notes

Description: Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Blessed Sacrament's Zoom Meeting

Time: Sept 13, 2023 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZlkd-qgrj8qG9Rt4LoXWaku9w9Mo6AzLDCs/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGupzspEtSRsBiHRpwAHYigb_zziClfjfpviEvJDBhkYwjib_UbH7opMcL8

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86903804010?pwd=MGJydS9qSW9LSzNGblZSM2xZcWpGZz09>

Meeting ID: 869 0380 4010

Passcode: 086586

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