

**TWENTY-FOURTH
SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME
YEAR A**

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Lord,
sometimes we offend you
by doing wrong
and not loving as we should.
You always forgive us
whenever we turn back to you.
We thank you
for your wonderful love,
for giving us the chance
to begin all over again.
Make us generous in forgiving
those who hurt us
and ready to make friends
with people
whom we have not liked.
We ask you to do this
through Jesus, your Son,
who lives with you,
forever and ever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Both of our readings focus on forgiveness. Our forgiveness of others is motivated by the forgiveness we have received.

We experience the forgiveness of our own act of forgiving. In readings, we are told that it is sense to expect forgiveness from ourselves, will not extend to others.

FIRST READING: Sirach 28:2-7.

This is a reading from the book of Sirach.

Our God says:

“Forgive people when they have hurt you.
Then when you pray,
your sins will be forgiven.

How can you say
you won’t forgive someone else
and then ask God to forgive you?
You are a sinner, too,
so have mercy on other people.

“Remember the commandments
and don’t hate people.
Remember the promises of God
and forgive others.”

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: Psalm 103

RESPONSE:

My God, my God, have mer - cy on me, for
all my hope is in you, my God, all my hope is in you.

VERSES: to Response

1. You call us to re - mem - ber the prom - is - es you gave us.
2. As par - ents love their chil - dren, you love your faith - ful peo - ple.
3. You love us and for - give us, you al - ways show us mer - cy.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Leader/All:

“You must for - give with all your heart.
Sev - en - ty times, sev - en - ty times sev - en.” says Je - su.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

GOSPEL: *Matthew 18:21-35*

This is a reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

One day Peter asked Jesus,

"How many times do I have to forgive someone who hurts me? As many as seven times?"

Jesus said to him,

"No, not only seven times, but seventy times seven!"

Then Jesus told the disciples this story:

"Once there was a king
who had many people working for him.
One of the workers owed him a lot of money
but couldn't pay it back.
The king was angry and told the guards
to sell the worker and his wife and children as slaves
to pay what the man owed.
But the man fell on his knees and begged the king,

'Please, be patient with me,
and I will pay you everything I owe you!'

"The king felt sorry for the man and forgave him.
He even said the man didn't have to pay back
the money he owed.

Now, when that same worker was leaving,
he saw another man who owed him
only a little bit of money. He grabbed him and said,

'Pay me what you owe me!'

"The man fell on his knees and said,

'Please be patient with me,
and I will pay you everything I owe you!'

"But the man, who had been forgiven, said, 'No!'
And he had the man put into prison.

"Now when the other workers saw what happened,
they went to the king and told him the whole story.
The king sent for the man he had forgiven
and said to him,

'You wicked man!
I forgave you and even forgot about
what you owed me because you begged me for mercy.
And then you wouldn't do the same for someone else!'

"So the king sent the man to prison to be punished.

"And that's the way it will be with you.

If you want God to forgive you,
you must forgive other people with all your heart."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Jesus insists that our forgiveness should be without limit. Matthew uses the Jewish symbol for absolute perfection or completeness: the number seven. But this symbol is even multiplied here; seventy times seven! The parable illustrates the point and expands the motivation. As we have been forgiven, we must forgive.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

What did Peter ask Jesus?

Acknowledge to the children that it can truly and naturally be exasperating when someone hurts or does something wrong over and over again. So Peter's question was quite normal.

What did Jesus answer? What do you think Jesus meant?

Help the children see that Jesus means *always*. We often say things like "I told you a million times," or "I had to wait a hundred years!" We don't mean that literally—we mean a lot or a very long time. Jesus meant *always*!

Ask the children to recall the story.

- Why was the king angry?
- What did he decide to do?
- What did the king do when the worker begged him not to sell his wife and children?
- How do you think the worker felt?
- What did the worker do when he left the king?
- What did the worker do when his fellow worker begged him to be patient?
- Why were the other workers angry?
- What did the king do then?

What does Jesus want us to know from this story? Help the children see that Jesus teaches us that we must treat others the way we want them and God to treat us.