

Twenty–Fourth Sunday of the Year A



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.

The gospel story tells of a person who failed to learn the meaning of forgiveness. As we come to celebrate Christ's love, we ask the Lord's help to lay aside any grudge or bitterness that is in our heart so that we may be reconciled to each other. Let us ask God's pardon for our sins.

Have mercy on us, O Lord. **For we have sinned against you.**

Show us, O Lord, your mercy. **And grant us your salvation.**

Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to life everlasting. **Amen.**

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory. Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Let us pray:

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. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus

27:30-28:7

Resentment and anger, these are foul things, and both are found with the sinner. He who exacts vengeance will experience the vengeance of the Lord who keeps strict account of sin. Forgive your neighbour the hurt he does you, and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven. If a man nurses anger against another, can he then demand compassion from the Lord? Showing no pity for a man like himself, can he then plead for his own sins? Mere creature of flesh, he cherishes resentment; who will forgive him his sins? Remember the last things, and stop hating, remember dissolution and death, and live by the commandments. Remember the commandments, and do not bear your neighbour ill-will; remember the covenant of the Most High, and overlook the offence.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalms 102: 1-4, 9-12.

**Response: 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/.**

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/.**

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/.**

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/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from St Paul's letter to the Romans

Romans 14:7-9

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord. This explains why Christ both died and came to life, it was so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**Alleluia, alleluia! Speak, Lord, your servant is listening:
You have the message of eternal life. Alleluia!**

GOSPEL

Matthew 18:21-35

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, Lord.

Peter went up to Jesus and said: "Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?" Jesus answered: "Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times. And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; but he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet. 'Give me time,' he said, 'and I will pay the whole sum.' And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt. Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him. 'Pay what you owe me,' he said. His fellow servant fell at his feet and implored him, saying: 'Give me time and I will pay you.' But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt. His fellow servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him. Then the master sent for him. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?' And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Offertory:

Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offering:

Look with favour on our supplications, O Lord, and in your kindness accept these, your servants' offerings, that what each has offered to the honour of your name may serve the salvation of all. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you.

Lift up your hearts.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

And with your spirit.

We lift them up to the Lord.

It is right and just.

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.
For you laid the foundations of the world
and have arranged the changing of times and seasons;
you formed man in your own image
and set humanity over the whole world in all its wonder,
to rule in your name over all you have made
and for ever praise you in your mighty works,
through Christ our Lord.
And so, with all the Angels, we praise you,
as in joyful celebration we acclaim:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

The mystery of faith. **We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.**

Communion Antiphon: **The chalice of blessing that we bless is a communion in the Blood of Christ;
and the bread that we break is a sharing in the Body of the Lord. *Psalms 35:8***

REFLECTION

Forgiveness

When we forgive we free ourselves of the burden of bitterness, and we free the other person of the burden of guilt. But forgiveness must come from the heart ... it must be true, sincere, and warm. A cold forgiveness is not much use. Forgiveness should start now. Putting it off only deepens the wound, prolongs bitterness, and postpones happiness. Life is short. Today is the day to forgive. Lord, deliver us from the poison of bitterness, give us the grace to forgive from the heart. Then we will know the warmth of your forgiveness.

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. **Amen.**

Final Blessing:

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

May almighty God bless you,

the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer: O God, strength and friend of the forsaken, we praise you in Jesus who bore the burden of our sins with a forgiving heart. Help us to walk in his spirit. We know a world of pain and anger that dots our history with war and division. Teach us how to respect our differences and to forgive as we have been forgiven. Give us the grace to realize the unity for which Jesus prayed. We ask this in his name. Amen.

Facing another week ...

Lord God, another week is beginning. I don't know how to face it. There are so many things I feel are just round the corner waiting to pounce on me ... things I haven't done, things I should have done, things I've done and shouldn't. What a lot and what a little! But, will you see me through this week? It would not be fair to say: 'make it easy for me', because I don't deserve it, for what I've not done and done wrong. So, you see where I stand, Lord ... I'm at the beginning of the week. I'm not sure: in fact I'm scared. So help me to face up and live through ... I can't in honesty ask for any more. Amen.