

TWENTY FOURTH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A; HOMILY HIGHLIGHTS

Readings; 1st Sirach 27:30-28:7, 2nd Rom. 14:7-9, Gospel Math. 18:21-35

Not only seven times but seventy seven times, must you forgive your brother/sister.

Introduction; when we pray the prayer of Our Father, we commit ourselves to a condition which demands us to forgive in order to be forgiven. If we listened to the words of this prayer, we at times could be obliged to stop praying and go out forgive and be reconciled with our friends and relatives and enemies if any, then come back and continue the prayer of Our Father. The question asked in the gospel about the times to forgive could be the same today because of our human ways of viewing forgiveness. Let us learn from the parable of the gospel the following lessons.

Reflection; in the first place we should learn how to accept others as they are either good or bad, and if it is possible help them overcome their shortcomings through our words and actions. This should be our Christian responsibility as taught to us by prophet Ezekiel (53:7-9), the life of others is our responsibility especially in bringing them back whenever they go astray. This is what St. Paul teaches in the second reading; we are not leaving our lives for ourselves but for others and for Christ. This is true for either we live or we die, we are the lord's.

Forgiveness is and always will be divine. Whenever we forgive others from our hearts we do the work of God. Forgiveness is power and this power unites us with God who has forgiven us through His beloved son our Lord Jesus Christ. This power to forgive puts to death in us the human desire for revenge, anger, envy, malicious thoughts and even despair which comes as the result of failing to forgive.

We have always met with people who are spiritually, mentally, emotionally and even physically sick simply because they are unable to forgive (not forgiven). Forgiveness has a healing effect. In order to remain always healthy then, we must forgive as often and as many times as we wish God to forgive us. Letting go the hurtful experience of the past is difficult that's why we have to pray for this gift and for humility to accept our shortcomings.

Forgiveness according to the Gospel of today demands from us the following; first that we forgive others with all our hearts. Forgiveness of our sins by God presupposes that we also forgive others, this is reciprocal in our prayer life, "blessed are the merciful for they will obtain mercy (Math. 5:7...). Second that, though it is difficult to forgive when others are not prepared to do so, we should overcome this condition and forgive as much as we can. This is applicable to us because no one has ever known the mind of God when it comes to forgiveness.

Finally, the church, our community and family should and must be forgiving institutions. Christian community is a forgiving one; we are sinners and are always in need of forgiveness. Let us all pray for a forgiving heart, a humble spirit which admits mistakes and asks for mercy.