

The Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle A
September 13, 2020

Christ the Good Shepherd Old Catholic Church
Reflection by Father Charles Blanchard

First Reading: SIR 27:30-28:7

Psalm: 103:1-2,3-4,9-10,11-12(8)

Second Reading: RM 14:7-9

Gospel: MT 18:21-35

“The Small Church with a Big Heart” walks with each and every one of us where we hear God’s Word and feast at the Eucharistic Table where there is no partiality, celebrating God’s Peace and Love!

To Christ the Good Shepherd Old Catholic Church’s enduring parishioners and new-found friends; people present, in person or through our social media platforms, forgiveness presumes, requires and demands **focus**, **fortitude**, and **forbearance**.

Forgiveness is today’s challenge from our readings.

- **Do I always forgive others?**
- **Or, do I forgive some who offend me and not others?**
- **Am I a person who bears grudges?**

- **How do I deal with the person who inflicts harm or hurts my feelings?**

Only God can give us the grace to forgive all others, those who have harmed us in any way at all. God calls us to immediate and complete forgiveness of others. God is so clear in today's readings: **if you do not forgive, how can you possibly ask forgiveness?**

My sisters and brothers, "words which are prayers often" for our spiritual well-being sit squarely on our collective doorstep today.

"Our Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Forgiveness presumes, requires and demands **focus**, **fortitude**, and **forbearance**.

We know the story of the older brother within the story of the prodigal son.

- The older brother really resents his younger brother.
- The younger brother goes off and wastes all of his inheritance.

- And then comes home and is received with incredible kindness and love by his father.

In the world's eyes, such a response is truly injustice! And yet it is how our God of Peace and Love wants us to live: judge not and you will not be judged!

How do I treat the person who harms me? Jesus gives us the story of the servant who could not pay his debt. None of us can repay our debt to the Lord. Should God then put us in prison and torture us? Instead he forgives us our debts and asks us to forgive others.

All of us who have fallen short of what good looks like (i.e., sinned) appreciate the debt that we owe to our great God of Peace and Love. **The more we see that debt, the more we can understand that we must forgive others.**

So much of our spiritual literature is focused on this type of forgiveness: look at the beam in your own eye before you try to take out the small piece of straw in the eye of your sister or brother!

The Book of Sirach spells out the teaching of today's Gospel as well: If anyone who is flesh cherishes wrath, who can forgive his sins? In order to be forgiven, we must learn to forgive.

The Letter to the Romans also speaks of our debt to one another: None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies

for oneself. We can only truly live when we live for the Lord—and the Lord is always compassionate and merciful. Today, when we hear His voice, let us not harden our hearts.

Instead, let us learn to forgive, even those things that seem unforgivable. It is God Himself inviting us to cleanse our souls and to forgive all who have harmed us in any way. Every time that we hold on to our anger, we damage only ourselves. Every time that we refuse forgiveness, we harm ourselves.

Let us live for God and live God's forgiveness today, tomorrow and beyond—from our hearts!

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Gracias de Dios para todos!