



**First Reading:** (Sir 27:30 - 28:7)

Anger and wrath, these also are abominations, and the sinful man will possess them. He that takes vengeance will suffer vengeance from the Lord, and he will firmly establish his sins. Forgive your neighbor the wrong he has done, and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray. Does a man harbor anger against another, and yet seek for healing from the Lord? Does he have no mercy toward a man like himself, and yet pray for his own sins? If he himself, being flesh, maintains wrath, who will make expiation for his sins? Remember the end of your life, and cease from enmity, remember destruction and death, and be true to the commandments. Remember the commandments, and do not be angry with your neighbor; remember the covenant of the Most High, and overlook ignorance.

**Ps 102:1-4, 9-12**

**R./ The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy.**

**Second Reading:** (Rom 14:7-9) None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or

whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

**Gospel:** (Mt 18:21-35) Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused

and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you be-

sought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

**Reflection:** Forgiveness brings peace and happiness. Jesus ends the parable by bringing into our notice the importance of forgiveness. Our reluctance to forgive others leads to our own ruin. God's forgiveness is unconditional therefore our forgiveness should not be conditional. **Our daily lives should be governed by the grace that flows from true forgiveness. Forgiveness unites what was divided and heals the hurts and wounds.** Jesus taught us forgiveness not only through parables but by His very life. In spite of the terrible loneliness and physical and mental torture Jesus forgave all those who offended Him. We may fail to remember the ones who made us laugh but we definitely will remember the one who hurt us. Forgiving someone who has hurt us is a difficult thing to do. Like Peter we may ask Jesus, 'how many times Lord, how many?' Jesus does not expect us to deal with our hurts and resentments alone. He will give us the strength to forgive others and allow us to experience his compassion and mercy.