

**READINGS AND REFLECTION
FOR THE 24th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/readings/?feature=sunday>

FIRST READING

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTICUS 27:30-28:7

*Forgive your neighbour the hurt he does you,
and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven.*

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.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM PS 102

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.

THE LORD IS COMPASSION AND LOVE, SLOW TO ANGER AND RICH IN MERCY.

It is he who forgives all your guilt,
who heals everyone of your ills,
who redeems your life from the grave,
who crowns you with love and compassion.

THE LORD IS COMPASSION AND LOVE, SLOW TO ANGER AND RICH IN MERCY.

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.

THE LORD IS COMPASSION AND LOVE, SLOW TO ANGER AND RICH IN MERCY.

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.

THE LORD IS COMPASSION AND LOVE, SLOW TO ANGER AND RICH IN MERCY.

SECOND READING

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF ST PAUL TO THE ROMANS 14:7-9

Alive or dead we belong to the Lord.

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.

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening: you have the message of eternal life.

1 Sam 3:9

GOSPEL

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 18:21-35

I tell you, not seven, but seventy-seven times.

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.'

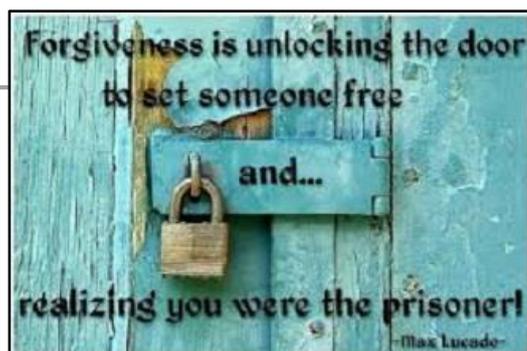
'And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants.

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

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REFLECTION

Throughout the next seven weeks, sections of the Australian Bishops Social Justice Statement 2020-21, released 19 August, 2020, will be printed for our consideration.

The Statement explores ***MENTAL HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA TODAY***

Key ideas from the *Foreward* written by Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane who is President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, are presented here.

COVID-19 pandemic is a threat in many ways – physical, social, political and economic. It is putting pressure on the mental health of many people in ways both seen and unseen.

Those who are at high risk, and those who love them, may be especially anxious. The loss of jobs and income from businesses, together with underemployment and insecure work, place enormous pressure on people trying to provide for themselves and their families.

Isolation has been difficult for many, and dangerous for people suffering family strife and domestic violence. Decision-makers are balancing care for both public health and safety and for social connection, the economy and other essential activities, including worship.

Many of us will experience a mental health problem at some time in our lives – and this may well be the time. In this Statement, the Bishops encourage faith communities, governments and each one of us, to make mental health a priority.

We want to say clearly that mental ill-health is not a moral failure, the result of a lack of faith, or of weak will. Jesus himself was labelled mad (Mark 3:21; John 10:19) and, like us, he suffered psychological distress (Luke 22:44; Matt 26:37; Mark 14:33; John 12:27). **People experiencing mental ill-health are not some ‘other’ people, they are ‘us’.**

People are suffering mental ill-health – and they can be of any age or socioeconomic background. We need one another’s understanding and support.

We commend the mental health support provided by volunteers and staff of Catholic organisations, hospitals, schools, and community health services, and we encourage you to reach out to them if you or your loved ones need support.

Gaps in the mental health system need to be addressed. Social determinants including poverty, living conditions and personal security, are significant contributors to mental ill-health. People who are vulnerable or disadvantaged are at greater risk of ill-health and of falling through gaps in the system.

A call during this pandemic has been “we are all in this together”. The quality of our care for the most vulnerable or disadvantaged will be the test of whether or not this is true.

A commitment to the common good means attending to the good of all of us, without exception. It means paying special attention to those who are most often overlooked, sidelined or excluded. It is surely time for us to make mental health a real priority, so that all people may know the fullness of life which Jesus offers (John 10:10).

<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/2020/07/03/social-justice-statement-2020-21/>