Suggested Opening Song: Amazing Grace, #217

We are reminded today of how important it is to forgive one another. When Peter asks Jesus how many times he needs to forgive someone, Jesus tells him not seven times, but seventy-seven times. He is essentially saying that there is no limit that should be put on forgiveness. After all, the Lord forgives us all constantly. And we need it! It's the least we can do to forgive someone who has hurt us. Let us call to mind our own sins and our own need for forgiveness even as we consider those to whom we should offer that same gift.

As we gather let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

Profession of Faith p. 142
I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*bow as we say*) ***and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.*** **For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Introductory Rite:
Greeting:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
Blessed be God forever. **Blessed be God forever.**

Penitential Rite: p. 10
Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to participate in this sacred celebration.

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

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

Opening Prayer:
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 and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Liturgy of the Word:

First Reading p. 86
A reading from the Book of the Prophet Sirach *Sirach 27:30-28:7*

Wrath and anger are hateful things, yet the sinner hugs them tight. The vengeful will suffer the LORD's vengeance, for he remembers their sins in detail. Forgive your neighbor's injustice; then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven. Could anyone nourish anger against another and expect healing from the LORD? Could anyone refuse mercy to another like himself, can he seek pardon for his own sins? If one who is but flesh cherishes wrath, who will forgive his sins? Remember your last days, set enmity aside; remember death and decay, and cease from sin! Think of the commandments, hate not your neighbor; remember the Most High's covenant, and overlook faults.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Responsorial Psalm *Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9*

R/. The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in compassion.
R/. The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in compassion.

Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all my being, bless his holy name.
Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. **R/.**

He pardons all your iniquities, heals all your ills.
He redeems your life from destruction, crowns you with kindness and compassion. **R/.**

He will not always chide, nor does he keep his wrath forever.
Not according to our sins does he deal with us, nor does he requite us according to our crimes. **R/.**

For as the heavens are high above the earth, so surpassing is his kindness toward those who fear him.
As far as the east is from the west, so far has he put our transgressions from us. **R/.**

Second Reading

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans *Romans 14:7-9*

Brothers and sisters: None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself. For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For this is why Christ died and came to life, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel *Matthew 18:21-35*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew **Glory to you, Lord**

Peter approached Jesus and asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times. That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount. Since he had no way of paying it back, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his property, in payment of the debt. At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.' Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan. When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding, 'Pay back what you owe.' Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But he refused. Instead, he had the fellow servant put in prison until he paid back the debt. Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair. His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?' Then in anger his

master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt. So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives your brother from your heart."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Reflection on the Word:

- In a way, today's Gospel is a logical extension of the golden rule. Earlier, Jesus taught his disciples, "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12). Today's parable teaches them: Forgive others as you would have them forgive you. He closes with the kicker: God will forgive you as you forgive others. None of us is sinless. None of us always does the right thing. None of us is proud of our weakest moment. Yes, we may be in the right in whatever case is leading to our resentment or anger. But if we don't forgive the person who injured us, we can't expect forgiveness from God, let alone a neighbor we ourselves have wronged.

- The king in Jesus' parable is so extravagant with his mercy that he doesn't just allow the servant to delay repayment of his debt, he forgives the debt altogether. Like the father of the prodigal son or Jesus on the cross forgiving the ones who put him to death, this king is merciful beyond expectations. He is moved with compassion and this leads him to mercy without limit. He has chosen to make his world one of mercy. The servant, on the other hand, cannot appreciate the gift he's been given. He lives in a world where anger and debts fester and never truly are forgiven. He cannot accept such profligate mercy because it makes the logic of his dog-eat-dog world senseless. We can choose the world we make. May we choose correctly.

Question of the Week

Reconciliation means making a relationship whole again. Whom do I need to forgive to make our relationship whole once more?

Prayer of the Faithful:

We cry out to God with our needs and the needs of our brothers and sisters, for the Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in compassion.

- For the Church, that we may be a model of forgiveness and mercy to the world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For reconciliation and lasting accord between all nations currently at war, that their citizens may live in the tender embrace of peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For those who have left the Church or left the practice of their faith, that they may always feel welcome and valued as part of the one, holy body of Christ, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For our neighbors in Mexico, Mexican Americans, and all who will celebrate the anniversary of Mexico's independence this week, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For grandparents, that they may receive care and compassion as they age, with the love of their children and grandchildren, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For what else should we pray? Let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, you lavish us with mercy as we turn to you with remorse. Teach us to forgive each other in the spirit of one who would forgive seventy-seven times, so that we may live in a world of reconciliation and peace. This and all our prayers we ask through the One who reconciled the world to you, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer: p. 176
Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

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.

Rite of Peace:
The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Communion:
Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion:
May the working of his 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**

Concluding Rite:
Final Blessing:
May the Lord bless us, ✠ protect us from all evil and lead us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Go in peace! **Thanks be to God.**

Suggested Closing Song: Make Me a Channel of Your Peace, #228