

Our Parish COMMUNITY

September 13, 2020

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Sir 27:30—28:7

Rom 14:7-9

Mt 18:21-35

Limitless Forgiveness

What makes seven such an important number?

It's the symbolism. It signifies wholeness, completeness, and totality. So, seventy-seven (or seventy times seven in some Bible translations) suggests infinity. Peter was exaggerating when he suggested that he might forgive his brother seven times. He presumed that if he acted in this way, his behavior would demonstrate the immeasurable extent of his personal graciousness. Jesus' response implied that there should be no end to our forgiving another. To underscore the significance of this magnanimity, Jesus offered God (in the guise of the king who forgave a huge debt) as the exemplar of forgiving.

Forgiving another's offense against us could well be one of the most difficult things we are asked to do. To ask for forgiveness does not seem as difficult. After all, when we bump into a perfect stranger in an elevator, we say, "Forgive me." But to forgive someone

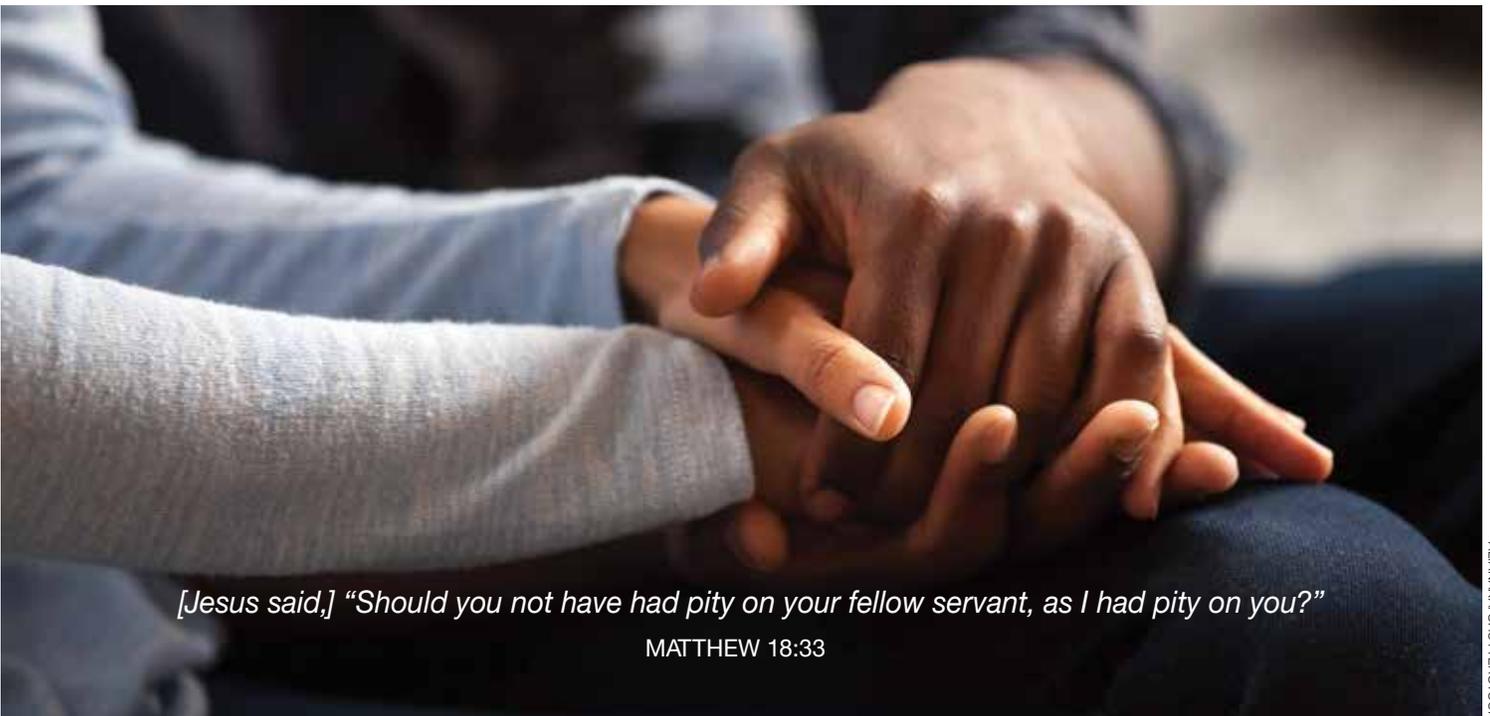
who has deliberately offended us, who has dishonored our sense of personal dignity, as slight as that offense might be, is neither as easy nor as casual a gesture. And yet, we must.

We all carry debts to others. Both the first reading and the Gospel passage remind us that the debts owed to us by others in no way compare with the debt we owe God, and yet God shows us compassion and forgives us. If we are grateful children of a compassionate God, we will want to be like God and we will forgive others.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR *Reflection*

- * Say the Lord's Prayer slowly, reflecting on "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."
- * Do you carry resentment in your heart? Does clinging to it lessen its burden in any way?



[Jesus said,] "Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?"

MATTHEW 18:33

ALANAKA/SHUTTERSTOCK



ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

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Weekend Masses: Vigil: 5:45pm, Sunday: 10:00am

Baptisms: by appointment 3 weeks in advance

Weddings: by appointment 6 months in advance

Vocations: Fr. Toby Collins www.vocationculture.ca



www.facebook.com/stmichaelpaget & "LIKE" us

Diocesan Webpage: www.romancatholicbermuda.bm

We welcome our parishioners and visitors who have come to St. Michael's to worship this Sunday. May you be blessed by your presence here today.

MASS SCHEDULE & INTENTIONS...

Sat., Sept 12th	5:45pm	Adelina & Jose De Frias +
Sun., Sept 13th	10:00am	Kirby Brackstone+
Sat., Sept 19th	5:45pm	Mary & Benjamin Botelho+
Sun., Sept 20th	10:00am	Doris Ramsay +

September 12/13 - 23rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

5:45PM Lector: Alberta Cannoneir

10:00AM Lector: Jesse Almeida

Counters: The Almeidas

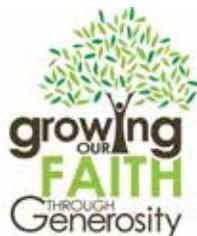
September 19/20 - 24rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

5:45PM Lector: Joshua Blee

10:00AM Lector: Jesse Almeida

Counters: The DeFrias

You are welcome to attend Morning Masses at
St. Theresa's - 7:30 Mon.—Fri. | St Anthony's - 8:00 Tues.—Fri.



STEWARDSHIP

The overall financial well-being of the parish is so important at this time.

WEEKLY COLLECTION FOR SEPTEMBER 5/6: \$714.00

ELECTRONIC CONTRIBUTIONS

FOR YOUR WEEKLY COLLECTION are welcomed.

Consider making it a quarterly, monthly or even weekly transactions.

Be sure to include your name and collection as your memo on your banking transaction.

"Please note, that we are charged \$20 for US\$ checks drawn on a US Bank."

ST. MICHAEL'S uses your regular collection contributions to support Parish Operations.

Thank you to those parishioners who have answered our call for stewardship to St. Michael's.

YOUR SUPPORT IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED.

Direct Deposit to Butterfield Bank (BNTB) to:
"The Ordinary of the Roman Catholic Church,
St. Michael's" Acct # 2000-6060-081824 -100

WORD FROM Pope Francis



The increase in the rates of suicide in your cities, as well as bullying and various kinds of neediness, are creating new forms of alienation....I ask you to pay special attention to [the young] and their needs. Try to create spaces...of generous and selfless love...to everyone, and not only to those who have "made it."

— MEETING WITH BISHOPS, TOKYO,
NOVEMBER 23, 2019

The Bishop's Corner



Dear Fellow-Catholics,

The Catholic Church in Bangladesh has begun a tree planting campaign to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the publication of Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si". This is also associated with the 50th anniversary of the country's independence and the 100th anniversary of the birth of Mujibur Rahman, a Bengali politician considered to be the father of the nation.

There are plans to plant four hundred thousand trees all over the country. This was inaugurated at the head of the Episcopal Conference in the capital of Bangladesh. The first tree was planted by the Archbishop of Dhaka. "Trees play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance. However, as the population grows, forest cover gradually declines as the world is hit by natural disasters. Our action shows that maintaining ecological balance also depends on us," said Cardinal Patrick D'Rozario.



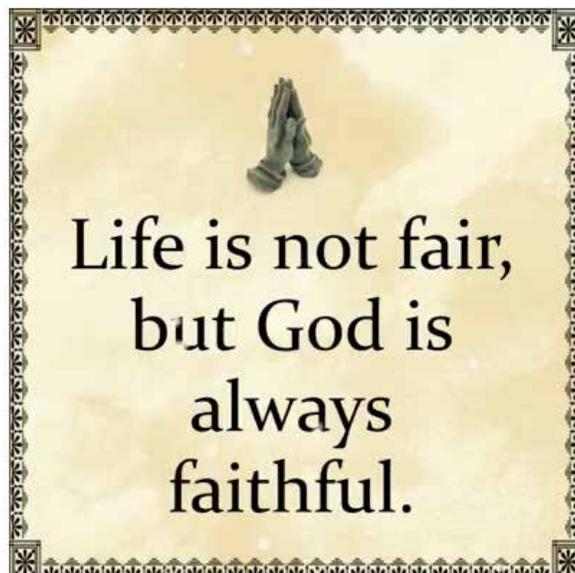
The purpose of the tree planting campaign is also to commemorate the independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan. Cardinal D'Rozario explained, "We love our nation and we have a responsibility to take care of its future. Bangladesh needs trees. We mainly plant fruit trees that will give food, but we also need trees that may in the future be a source of wood necessary for building houses."

This initiative also aims to put Bangladesh on the international arena by joining the global struggle to improve the quality of the environment. "We also want to promote the replacement of plastic bags with jute bags, the use of waste in the production of fertilizers, and saving drinking water," said Benedict Alo D'Rozario, president of Caritas Asia.

Warren Buffett (who was born on the same day as my mom) said, "Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago."

Enjoy your weekend and have a blessed week!

+ *Wes Jurewicz*
Bishop Wes



READING 1 *Sir 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.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12*

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

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

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

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

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

READING 2 *Rom 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.

ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA

I give you a new commandment, says the Lord;
Love one another as I have loved you. *John 13:34*

ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA

GOSPEL *Mt 18:21-35*

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."

Dear Padre,

We knew a beloved priest whose death was self-inflicted. What is the Church's stance on suicide?

I offer my heartfelt sympathy to you and the faith community for this tragic loss. "We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2280). Those who take their own life to end personal suffering assume a decision-making that belongs to God alone. However, the Church also acknowledges that "grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide" (CCC 2282).

At the same time, the Church relies on the compassion of God, who fully knows the intensity of suffering that triggers suicide. Therefore, the Church pastorally states: "We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives" (CCC 2283).

How, then, does the Church specifically pray for those who've committed suicide? Generally they're not deprived of full burial rites in the Church, which consoles the living and commends all of the dead "to God's merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins" (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 6). Nor are they deprived of burial in a Catholic cemetery—a sacred place that helps bring peace to those confronted by the sudden death of a suicide.

—Fr. Byron Miller, *CSsR Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org*



UPDATE - CCD 2020/2021 Year

Please be advised that the current plan for CCD reopening is scheduled for **October 10/11th**. It is hoped that by mid October our children will have settled in to new school norms. And protocol for CCD can be advised prior to our reopening for the new school year.

All options are being reviewed and announcements will be made in September to you from the Diocese and Parishes.

We hope for now you are enjoying summer and well.

Essie Hans, DDRE

Diocese of Hamilton in Bermuda

Bishop Wes will be taping the Saturday evening Mass each week at the Cathedral and will post it for viewing on the websites below.

Please visit,

www.romancatholicbermuda.bm

Click on "Bishop Wes, CR – Gospel Reflection

or

www.facebook.com/CatholicDioceseBermuda

Forgive your neighbor's injustice;
then when you pray,
your own sins will be forgiven.

Sirach 28:2



In many of our relationships with others—friends, spouse, neighbors, or co-workers—often the most difficult times come when someone damages the relationship. There are moments when only apology and forgiveness can lead to healing. In this week's readings, we are reminded how our connection with God is woven into our relationships with others. God is the source of all mercy, and all of us stand in need of forgiveness. As we are able to accept the mercy of God deep within our hearts, we become empowered to show mercy to others. When things go badly in our relationships, we can remember that God is present at the center of these difficult moments. God is offering grace to ask forgiveness, to receive apology, and to accept the forgiveness extended to us.

FORGIVEN AND FORGIVING

In today's Gospel, Jesus calls his followers to forgive "seventy-seven" times. In other words, stop keeping track when forgiving others. But when we are hurt, this is really hard to do. In fact, to protect ourselves from further hurt, we might be inclined to do the opposite, and lash out. Jesus teaches the futility of this approach.

Jesus' parable of the unforgiving servant reminds us that in the course of our lives we have harmed others, and so distanced ourselves from God. We have also been harmed by others. Like the servant, we sometimes owe a debt, and sometimes others owe a debt to us. Here

we are invited to stop the cycle of pain with the grace of mercy. We are called to imitate our God, who forgives wholeheartedly.

PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE

It is also tempting to view this teaching on forgiveness in isolation. This would suggest that the burden is placed entirely upon the offended person to go on forgiving, without mentioning any accountability on the part of the offending person. This interpretation can often be dangerous. The call to forgive should never be used as a cover for bullying or for oppressive relationships of any kind.

It is helpful to consider all of chapter 18 in Matthew's Gospel, which teaches about forgiveness and reconciliation, and the exercise of authority in the Christian community. Last week's Gospel (Matthew 18:15-18) provides guidance on how Christians can call to accountability someone who has hurt others, to protect the weak, and to seek reconciliation as a community. The parable we hear today reminds us that, like the master who protected the second servant from the cruelty of the unforgiving servant, God seeks to guard the most vulnerable from harm.

The Gospel of Matthew presented an alternative to the violence-based order of his day. Matthew described Jesus' vision of community, in which power is used at the service of all and the vulnerable are protected and cherished.

TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION

In the early years of the church, most people never availed themselves of once-in-a-lifetime penance. Yet penitents were highly visible. They wore distinctive garments or chains, and they were relegated to special zones in the church. They might be dismissed from the Sunday assembly after the Word, forbidden to join in the Prayer of the Faithful or the Eucharist. This dismissal was done with great affection and tenderness as the bishop laid his hands on the heads of the sinners. During Lent almost everyone would identify with penitents by

clothing, insignia, or by following the penitents' regular diet. Rather than sit in judgment over them, the church desired to intercede for them before the Lord. "Let Mother Church weep for you and wash away your sins with her tears," said St. Ambrose to his penitents in Milan. Ambrose liked to think of them as Jonah in the whale, meditating on his errors. In a letter to his sister he said that Jonah is also a sign of Christ in the tomb, and so he had great faith in the penitents' future proclamation of the Resurrection with their reclaimed status in the assembly.

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND THE DIOCESE

CONGRATULATIONS AND CONTINUED BLESSING TO BISHOP ROBERT KURTZ as he celebrates his 25th Anniversary of his Episcopal Ordination, on Tuesday, September 15th. *Please keep him in your prayers.*

DIOCESAN LECTIO DIVINA each Monday by Zoom. For more information contact Franz Wohlmut at fgwohlmuth@logic.bm.

CARITAS HOUSE OF PRAYER: Quiet Wednesdays continue on September 16th with the recitation of the rosary and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at 10:30AM. Social distancing takes place and hand sanitizer is available. All are welcome. Parish life tends to revolve around the school year so we are beginning a new year of ministry. For us this will be in a limited way as we continue to prepare for our return to Massachusetts. Once again if there is an intention you would like us to add to our blue intention book, please call us at 236-5877.

REFLECTION Our Gospel today opens with Peter asking Jesus how often should he forgive. Jesus proceeds to tell a parable of the kingdom. The servant, who was forgiven by his master, lacks total compassion for his fellow servant and demands payment of the debt owed him. His master learns of his harsh and unjust treatment of his fellow servant, calls him wicked and hands him over to torturers until he pays his debt. Today's message is clear. The need for us to forgive anyone who offends us is paramount to our expecting God's forgiveness. We are called to forgive from the heart. Let us not hold any grudges in our hearts. Forgive and we shall be forgiven. Then God's peace will fill our hearts.

Sisters Dolores and Judith

12:10 MASS at ST. THERESA'S CATHEDRAL

WEEKDAY MASS HAS RESUMED



The Pontifical Good Friday Collection

**HOLY LAND COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND
SEPT 12/13 AT ALL AMSES**

Due to the disruption caused by the coronavirus and the lockdown of the Church over Easter, the Apostolic Nunciature has requested that the collection normally taken for the Holy Land during the Good Friday service be moved to THIS weekend, September 12 and 13. This special collection will support Christians in the Holy Land and help provide upkeep of the sacred places. **Please be generous.**