



The Word

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Week ending September 17

Call to Prayer and Sharing

- ✦ *Leader invites all into a few moments of silent reflection to remember that we are in the presence of God. (reflective pause)*
- ✦ *Then: "In the name of the Father and of the Son"*

The Word of God

- ✦ *Leader reads part or all of one of the scripture texts from the previous Sunday.*

Matthew 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."

Faith Sharing

- ✦ *Leader reminds everyone of the Question of the Week which relates to the particular group gathered*

Children: Why is it important to forgive others? Why is it important to ask for forgiveness?

Teens: How can holding a grudge keep you from experiencing the healing of forgiveness?

Adults: In what ways have you put limits on forgiveness in the past?

We offer this form of contemplative sharing for pondering Scripture while considering the question, and for the faith sharing which follows.

- Listen/ Read (Lectio): Ponder God's word and listen for what touches your heart.
- Meditate (Meditatio): Notice what you notice. Allow God's word to resonate in you.
- Speak/Share (Oratio): Prayerfully share with the group your thoughts and feelings.
- Rest in God's presence (Contemplatio): Notice God's presence and be still, surrounded by God's love.

Time is provided for sharing responses to the question. Silence between responses is to be expected. Allow about 15 minutes for faith sharing. For larger groups, leader invites members to divide into groups of three or four for faith sharing.

- ✦ *When the sharing comes to an end, the leader invites everyone to take a moment to silently and reverently hold what has been shared together.*
- ✦ *Continue with the meeting, turning to the agenda.*

Concluding the meeting

At the end of the meeting, the leader closes with the following prayer:

Good and Gracious God,
your love for us surpasses all understanding.

As we leave here today,
be with us in all our comings and goings,
and in all that we say and do.
We pray this in the name of Christ Jesus who is our Light.
Amen.