

**LITURGY OF
THE WORD****1st Reading** 1 Sm 26:2.7-9.

12-13.22-23

Forgiveness of offenses was not a common virtue in the ancient world. This beautiful example of David's magnanimity toward his enemy Saul is not only a happy exception, but also something that puts to shame those Christians who seem unable to forgive.

R –A proclamation from the First Book of Samuel

In those days, Saul went down to the desert of Ziph with three thousand picked men of Israel, to search for David in the desert of Ziph.

David and Abishai went among Saul's soldiers by night and found Saul lying asleep within the barricade, with his spear thrust into the ground at his head, and Abner and his men sleeping around him. Abishai whispered to David: "God has delivered your enemy into your grasp this day. Let me nail him to the ground with one thrust of the spear. I will not need a second thrust!" But David said to Abishai, "Do not harm him, for who can lay hands on the Lord's anointed and remain unpunished?" So David took the spear and the water jug from their place at Saul's head, and they got away without anyone's seeing or knowing or awakening. All remained asleep, because the Lord had put them into a deep slumber.

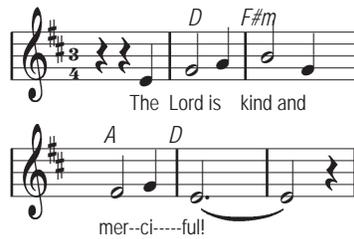
Going across to an opposite slope, David stood on a remote hilltop at a great distance from Abner, son of Ner, and the troops. He said: "Here is the king's spear. Let an attendant come over to get it. The Lord will reward each man for his justice and faithfulness. Today, though the Lord delivered you into my grasp, I would not harm the Lord's anointed."

The Word of the Lord!
All—Thanks be to God!

Responsorial Psalm Ps 103

R –*The Lord is kind and merciful!*

R. M. Velez



* 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.**

* Merciful and gracious is the Lord, slow to anger and abounding in kindness. Not according to our sins does he deal with us, nor does he requite us according to our crimes. **R.**

* As far as the east is from the west, so far has he put our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him. **R.**

2nd Reading 1 Cor 15:45-49

As disciples of Jesus, we are expected to live according to his teaching and example. This includes loving even the "unlovable," in a constant effort to rise above our natural inclination to repay evil with evil.

R –A proclamation from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

It is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being," the last Adam a life-giving spirit. But the spiritual was not first; rather the natural and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, earthly; the second man, from heaven.

As was the earthly one, so also are the earthly, and as is the heavenly one, so also are

the heavenly.

Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one.

The Word of the Lord!
All—Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation Jn 13:34

All—Alleluia! Alleluia!

I give you a new commandment, says the Lord: love one another as I have loved you. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Gospel Lk 6:27-38

We continue reading from Jesus' "Sermon on the Plain." Today Jesus continues his "inaugural discourse" by proclaiming the climax of his teaching: love of neighbor without boundaries and without conditions.

P –A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Luke

All—Glory to you, O Lord!

Jesus said to his disciples: "To you who hear, I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount.

But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the

wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give, and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you."

The Gospel of the Lord!
All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Homily

Profession of Faith

(Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed)

All—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*)* **and by the Holy Spirit 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!

Prayer of the Faithful

P —Challenged by the message of today's First Reading and the Gospel, let us ask the Lord's help to be able to love the way He has taught us. Let our response be:

All—Lord, teach us to love as You love!

C —For the Pope and all other spiritual leaders: May they constantly proclaim the stern demands of love and forgiveness and be the first to put them into practice. Let us pray! **R.**

C —For all Christians, who are called to promote a civilization of love and justice: May they persevere in their effort despite all difficulties and setbacks. Let us pray! **R.**

C —For all the victims of violence and injustice: May they find in the example of Christ and in the power of God's grace the strength they need to forgive their oppressors. Let us pray! **R.**

C —For all parents and educators: May their readiness to forgive make credible their teaching that we should love even our offenders. Let us pray! **R.**

C —For all Filipinos who are working hard to build a better nation: May they learn to reject evil and treasure honesty and love of neighbor. Let us pray! **R.**

C —Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. (*Pause*) Let us pray! **R.**

P —Lord of mercy and forgiveness, strengthen our hearts with Your grace that we may put into practice in our daily life the love we celebrate in this Eucharist. We ask this through Jesus Christ Your Son who lives and loves for ever and ever.
All—Amen!

**LITURGY OF
THE EUCHARIST**



Preparation of the Gifts

P —Pray, brethren. . .
All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P —As we celebrate your mysteries, O Lord, with the observance that is your due, we humbly ask you, that what we offer to the honor of your majesty may profit us for salvation.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen!

Preface III

P —The Lord be with you!

All—And with your spirit!

P —Lift up your hearts!

All—We lift them up to the Lord!

P —Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

All—It is right and just!

P —It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For we know it belongs to your boundless glory, that you came to the aid of mortal beings with your divinity and even fashioned for us a remedy out of mortality itself, that the cause of our downfall might become the means of our salvation, through Christ our Lord.

Through him the host of Angels adores your majesty and rejoices in your presence for ever. May our voices, we pray, join with theirs in one chorus of exultant praise, as we acclaim:

All—Holy, holy, holy . . .

Memorial Acclamation

P —The mystery of faith!

All—When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again!

**COMMUNION
RITE**



All—Our Father . . .

P —Deliver us, Lord . . .

All—For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.

Sign of Peace

Breaking of the Bread

All—Lamb of God . . .

Communion

P —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.

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

Communion Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.)

I will recount all your wonders, I will rejoice in you and be glad, and sing psalms to your name, O Most High.

Prayer after Communion

P —Grant we pray, almighty God, that we may experience the effects of the salvation which is pledged to us by these mysteries

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen!

CONCLUDING RITES



P —The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit!

P —Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.
(Pause)

—May the Lord grant you a generous heart that you may be able to forgive all offenses done to you.

All—Amen!

P —May He shower you with His grace so that you may overflow with love for all, even your enemies.

All—Amen!

P —May He direct your steps to Himself, and show you

how to walk in charity and peace.

All—Amen!

P —May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the

Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All—Amen!

P —Go in peace to love your neighbor as Jesus did.

All—Thanks be to God!

Challenged to Love

by Jess P. Balon

Jesus does not seem tired of shocking his disciples. He has already jolted them with the "beatification" of the poor, the hungry, the despised and the persecuted, and the four "woes" addressed to the rich, the well-fed, the satisfied and those who enjoy the favor of the people. Now **his shocking power reaches its climax, as he demands that his disciples love their enemies and do good to those who hate them.**

This injunction is far more demanding than the well-established commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself. No leader has ever asked so much of his followers. Jesus did and still does. And **his whole life** (and not just his praying for those who were insulting him on Calvary) **was a constant living out of the command to love one's enemies and do good to them for**, as the Son of God, **he had become a human being exactly to give his life for his very enemies** — all sinners!

But now this command to love one's enemies is addressed by him to frail human beings who already find it hard to constantly love even their own relatives and friends! . . . Hence the question: How can Jesus make such a demand? And the simple answer is: Because the command to love one's neighbor includes also one's enemies. **Every human being**, in fact, and not just my friends, or the members of my club, or my team or my race . . . **is my "neighbor." We are expected to love all human beings, for they are all children of God and our brothers or sisters in Christ.**

"Do to others what you would have them do to you," continues Jesus in his "Sermon on the Plain" thereby proclaiming the "Golden Rule" which covers all aspects of our relationship with our neighbor. (See Lk 6:31.) And since everybody wants to be treated with respect, honor, care, understanding, and love, the conclusion is that we should treat everybody — including those who have deliberately hurt us — not the way they treat us, but the way we would like to be treated.

This, as we all know very well, is not a spontaneous reaction. Instinctively, when we have been hurt, we tend to retaliate and get even, or at least to withhold from those who have offended us those signs of love that we used to have for them. If we do not go to war, the least we are tempted to do is "to sever our diplomatic ties," and learn to live as if that person did not exist.

Jesus is not satisfied with our refraining from belligerent actions, for **a "cold treatment" fails to meet the demands of love. "Do good to those who hate you,"** he presses us. **"Bless those who curse you and pray for those who maltreat you."** Herein is the challenge to be heroic by loving in a practical manner even the "unlovable."

This is the challenge to follow in the footsteps of our Model, **Jesus** himself, **"the New Man"** and **"the life-giving spirit."** (See today's Second Reading.) **Being new creatures in him, we must love the way he did.** In so doing, we will be learning to live and love in a God-like manner, for our common Father is always compassionate and continues to love even those who offend and reject Him. (See v. 35.)

This is a tall order, indeed, but if we really want to go to heaven, we do not have any alternative, **"for the measure with which we measure,"** says Jesus, **"will in return be measured out to us."** (See today's Gospel, v. 38.)



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PUBLICATIONS

Don Bosco Compound, A. Arnaiz Ave. cor. Chino Roces Ave., Makati, Metro Manila

Postal Address: P.O. Box 1820, MCPO, 1258 Makati, Metro Manila, Philippines

Tel. Nos. 894-5401; 894-5402; 892-2169 • Telefax: 894-5241 • Website: www.wordandlife.org

• E-mail: marketing@wordandlife.org; wordandlifepublications@gmail.com • FB: Word & Life Publications

• Editorial Team: Fr. S. Putzu, J. Domingo, A. Adsuara, V. David, D. Daguio, R. Molomog

• Illustrations: A. Sarmiento, B. Cleofe • Marketing: Fr. B. Nolasco • Circulation: R. Saldua