**TUESDAY MARCH 22 – THIRD WEEK OF LENT [C]**

**“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 his brother from his heart."**

**Let us read the parable of Jesus using the golden rule as it is proclaimed in the Gospel according to Matthew: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread, or a snake when he asks for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him. "Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets.” (Mt 7, 7-12) If the Master were in the place of the servant who owes a huge amount, he surely would his debt to be forgiven. Since he would want the total forgiveness, he gives his debtor the total forgiveness. Thus doing he reveals his great piety, his compassion with no measure. Truly, is his measure of piety overflowing. Ten thousand talents are a huge amount. They are an unaffordable amount. The debtor could never have paid his debt back. It is humanly impossible. It is an endless debt. It can be settled only for compassion, for mercy, for piety.**

**What happens then? It happens that the one to whom the debt was forgiven finds one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. Nothing compared to the debt that was settled for compassion. All the master’s mercy was manifested over him. He has no piety, though, he shows no piety. He reveals himself in all the wickedness and evil of his heart. He demands the debt to be paid immediately. The other one cries out for mercy, but in vain. For him there is no piety and he had him put into prison until he had paid back his debt. Here is in what the wickedness of this man consists: he asks for compassion and receives it. He is asked for compassion and does not give it. Rather, he shows all the wickedness and evil of heart. Those who are there see what the servant does to the other servant and immediately report their master the whole affair. The master summons the servant, withdraws the compassion given before and demands to pay the debt back until the last mite. You had no compassion and I will not have toward you, either.**

**What does Jesus want to teach us through this parable? The same truth He had already revealed to us in the Prayer of Our Father: “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one. If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.” (Mt 6, 12-15) We are the ones who give the Lord the measure of his forgiveness. If we forgive, He forgives us. If we do not forgive, neither does He forgive us. If we give Him a measureless measure, even his measure will be measureless. If we offer Him a measure of meanness and narrowness, even his measure will be mean and narrow. If then we give Him a measure of evil and wickedness, the Lord might have neither piety, nor compassion, nor mercy for us.**

**Let us read the text of Mt 18,21-35**

**Then Peter approaching asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? 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 him 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 his brother from his heart."**

**Today many are the disciples of Jesus who proclaim that the Lord is only mercy, only compassion, only piety. Those speak of a God, and of a Lord imagined by them, produced with the fusion of their thoughts that are thoughts of darkness and not of light. The God of Jesus Christ, instead, is the God who forgives with no measure on the condition that man forgives with no measure, as well. Why must we forgive? Because we, too, need to be forgiven. Why must we always have compassion? Because we, too, need perennial and uninterrupted compassion. We are the measure of the compassion of our God. Mother rich in compassion teach us to love as you love.**