**THURSDAY AUGUST 11 – XIX WEEK O.T. [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**

**The forgiveness of man toward every other man is a commandment of the Lord. Here is how the Sirach teaches the forgiveness: “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. Should a man nourish anger against his fellows and expect healing from the LORD? Should a man refuse mercy to his fellows, yet seek pardon for his own sins? If he 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; of the Most High's covenant, and overlook faults.” (Sir 28,1-7).**

**Here to what heights Jesus the Lord brings the relationship of his disciples with every other man: "You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever says to his brother, 'Raqa,' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” (Mt 5,21-24). And also: "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on (your) right cheek, turn the other one to him as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go with him for two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow.” (Mt 5,38-42). The Christian neither lets the offence enter his heart and his mind, in the same way as Jesus did not let it enter his heart and his mind while He was nailed on the Golgotha before the world.**

**The Apostle Paul teaches the Christians of Rome and through them to the Christian of the entire world, that one must never repay evil for evil, but evil must always be conquered remaining, the disciple of Jesus, in good: “Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all. Beloved, do not look for revenge but leave room for the wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." Rather, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good.” (Rm 12,17-21) Not only is the disciple of Jesus the one who does not know the offence, he is also the one who repay evil for good.**

**Let us read the text of Mt 18,21-19.1**

**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."** **When Jesus finished these words, he left Galilee and went to the district of Judea across the Jordan.**

**What does Jesus add in this parable? He adds a truth that must always be jealously kept in the heart: “My debt contracted before God might ever be satisfied. It is of endless greatness. Even if one sold himself as a slave, he might ever pay off the debt. It is beyond the value of his life. The debt of man toward man is always payable. It is minimal in relation to our debt contracted before God.” Here is the second truth: “The Lord has forgiven the debt of the brother toward me. If I do not forgive, I will never be forgiven and without the forgiveness of God, it is eternal death.” Whoever loves each other, forgives. Whoever hates each other, does not forgive. Mother of God, help us forgive.**