**THURSDAY AUGUST 12 – XIX WEEK O.T. [B]**

**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."**

**The forgiveness of the offences is essence of our faith. God forgives us. We must forgive our debtors: “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 is an example of non-vengeance from King David: “As David was approaching Bahurim, a man named Shimei, the son of Gera of the same clan as Saul's family, was coming out of the place, cursing as he came. He threw stones at David and at all the king's officers, even though all the soldiers, including the royal guard, were on David's right and on his left. Shimei was saying as he cursed: "Away, away, you murderous and wicked man! The LORD has requited you for all the bloodshed in the family of Saul, in whose stead you became king, and the LORD has given over the kingdom to your son Absalom. And now you suffer ruin because you are a murderer." Abishai, son of Zeruiah, said to the king: "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over, please, and lop off his head." But the king replied: "What business is it of mine or of yours, sons of Zeruiah, that he curses? Suppose the LORD has told him to curse David; who then will dare to say, 'Why are you doing this?'" Then the king said to Abishai and to all his servants: "If my own son, who came forth from my loins, is seeking my life, how much more might this Benjaminite do so! Let him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. Perhaps the LORD will look upon my affliction and make it up to me with benefits for the curses he is uttering this day." David and his men continued on the road, while Shimei kept abreast of them on the hillside, all the while cursing and throwing stones and dirt as he went. The king and all the soldiers with him arrived at the Jordan tired out, and stopped there for a rest.” (2Sam 16,5-14). Ruling the instinct of vengeance is an obligation for every true faithful in the God who forgives.**

**As God is indulgent toward everyone, so each of his worshipper must be indulgent toward everyone: “For with you great strength abides always; who can resist the might of your arm? Indeed, before you the whole universe is as a grain from a balance, or a drop of morning dew come down upon the earth. But you have mercy on all, because you can do all things; and you overlook the sins of men that they may repent. For you love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made; for what you hated, you would not have fashioned. And how could a thing remain, unless you willed it; or be preserved, had it not been called forth by you? But you spare all things, because they are yours, O LORD and lover of souls, for your imperishable spirit is in all things! Therefore you rebuke offenders little by little, warn them, and remind them of the sins they are committing, that they may abandon their wickedness and believe in you, O LORD! (Wis 11,21-12,2).**

**Jesus adds a new commandment into his Law. The offended must search for the reconciliation with the offender if he wants his prayer to be heard: “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. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court with him. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny.” (Mt 5,23-26).**

**The forgiveness given with no condition is also a new commandment of Jesus the Lord: “In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him. "This is how you are to pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread; 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 6,7-15). The disciple of Jesus must never forget that he, in Christ, with Christ, for Christ, is called to expiate the sins of the world and also of those who offended or offend him. Christ expiated our sins. In Him, we must expiate the sins of the world. Expiation begins from forgiveness. Without forgiveness, one might never join the redemption of Christ Jesus. There will have to be difference of action and of thought between Christ and his body.**

**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.**

**Now let us ask ourselves: What does this Parable narrated by Jesus the Lord add of new? Firstly, the reply given to Peter must be highlighted: one must always give the forgiveness forever. There is no fault that should not be forgiven. No fault is more serious than the condemnation to death of the Son of the Most High. As Jesus not only forgave, but he also offered his life as a ransom for every man, so each of his disciple must behave: forgiveness is always forever. The second truth reveals that our debt before God is not solvable. It is unpayable. The debt of our brothers is solvable, payable. If we want the Lord to forgive our insolvable we have to forgive the debt toward us that is always solvable. If we do not forgive, there will not be forgiveness for us. One of our small act of forgiveness lets the Lord forgive us. It is eternal law. Without our forgiveness, He does not forgive and for us the gates of the eternal hell are opened. May the Mother of Jesus at the feet of the cross help us so that we always forgive, as She forgave when She was on the Golgotha close to her Son.**