

'And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; but he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet. "Give me time," he said, "and I will pay the whole sum." And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt. Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him. "Pay what you owe me," he said. His fellow servant fell at his feet and implored him, saying, "Give me time and I will pay you." But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt. His fellow servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him. Then the master sent for him. "You wicked servant," he said, "I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?" And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart.'

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.**

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

17 SEPTEMBER 2023

THE CALL TO FORGIVENESS

A well-balanced life is something worth striving for, but human nature being what it is, balance is not always easily achieved. Today the readings deal with the question of balance and consistency regarding how we expect God to treat us and the ways we deal with each other. Resentment, vengeance, and anger can all find their place in the human heart and Ecclesiasticus advises that a more tolerant approach is more beneficial. If we cannot forgive each other, how can anyone expect God to forgive our failings?

Matthew approaches the question from the other direction. Rather than looking at what we will receive from the Lord, the striking parable of the two debtors teaches us to look at what we have already received. Since God has already looked kindly and mercifully on us this should lead to a corresponding degree of forbearance with one another.

While it is not stated in today's reading from Romans, Paul is dealing with a community where there was some tension regarding eating meat left over from temple sacrifices. For the more liberal members of the community eating this meat was not a problem. Others in the community were scandalised and thought it was idolatry. Paul's approach is to remind both groups that whatever we do influences our brothers and sisters. As Christians, the way to find a sense of balance is to remember that we are called to live for the Lord. Sometimes this calls us to die to ourselves to preserve peace and unity. Christ gave his life for us all, should we not do the same for each other?

Christopher Monaghan CP

FIRST READING

Sir 27:30–28:7

A reading from the Book of Sirach.

Forgive your neighbour's faults and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven.

Resentment and anger, these are foul things, and both are found with the sinner. He who exacts vengeance will experience the vengeance of the Lord, who keeps strict account of sin. Forgive your neighbour the hurt he does you, and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven. If a man nurses anger against another, can he then demand compassion from the Lord? Showing no pity for a man like himself, can he then plead for his own sins? Remember the last things, and stop hating, remember dissolution and death, and live by the commandments.

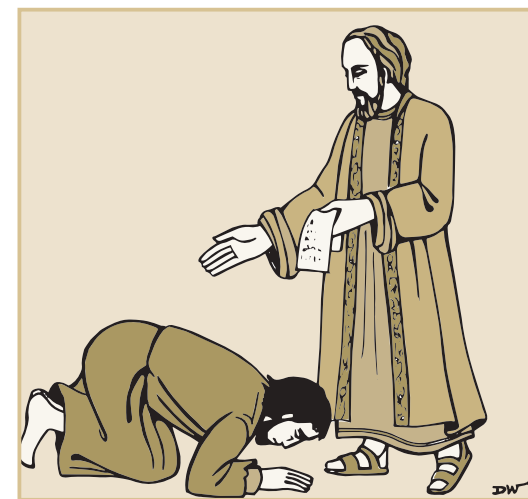
Remember the commandments, and do not bear your neighbour ill-will; remember the covenant of the Most High, and overlook the offence.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 102: 1-4, 9-12. R. v. 8

R. The Lord is kind and merciful; slow to anger and rich in compassion.

1. My soul, give thanks to the Lord, / all my being, bless his holy name. / My soul, give thanks to the Lord / and never forget all his blessings. **R.**
2. It is he who forgives all your guilt, / who heals every one of your ills, / who redeems your life from the grave, / who crowns you with love and compassion. **R.**
3. His wrath will come to an end; / he will not be angry for ever. / He does not treat us according to our sins / nor repay us according to our faults. **R.**
4. For as the heavens are high above the earth / so strong is his love for those who fear him. / As far as the east is from the west / so far does he remove our sins. **R.**



SECOND READING

Rom 14: 7-9

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans.

Whether alive or dead, we belong to the Lord.

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord. This explains why Christ both died and came to life, it was so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Jn 13: 34

Alleluia, alleluia! / I give you a new commandment: / love one another as I have loved you. / Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 18: 21-35

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

I tell you that you forgive not seven times but seventy times seven.

Peter went up to Jesus and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times.'



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Our Parishes acknowledge and honour the Bidjigal and Gadigal People as traditional custodians of this land, that we stand on.



24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Go Make Disciples, The Mission Plan for the Archdiocese of Sydney

Please pray for the Faithful Departed:

Recently Deceased: Rosario Raco (40 days anniversary) Metilda Vincint Catalina Montecinos, Evelyn Mahoney, Rosa Goveia Leite, Mario Selar, and all those who have died from the Covid-19 Virus.

Deceased: Agnes Brisbane. All the souls in Purgatory.

Anniversary: Teofila Depcynski, Angelina Da Cruz, Alexandre Cort-Real, Florinda Corte-Real, Archbishop Rush, Carla Quintão, Arun Terrence Infanciano David Blackmore, Giovanni Spano, Yolande & Robert Aquilina.

The Sick: Ange Portelli, Ha Oi Lan, Mario Assini, Beatrice Bentley, Sam Strano, Josephie Regan, Mary Vella, Robert 'Bob' Spanswick, Beatriz Visperas, Michael Victor, Marcus O'Dean, Angela Beveridge, Marie Cullen, Merley Nate Fien, Patrick Sargent, John Sarniak Thomson, Pam O'Grady, Heracleo & Mamerta Dela Torre, Santa Viselli and Ernie Ross. Pray for the sick, the dying, the poor and homeless in our parishes, and those suffering from Covid.

Prayers for: Christian people of Manipur India, and for the care of the World Environment.



Where will Fr. John be celebrating Mass next weekend?

Saturday - 23 September 2023 - 5.00pm St Andrew's (Livestreamed)
Sunday - 24 September 2023 - 10.00am St Agnes'



Greetings to all parishioners and visitors of St Andrew & St Agnes Twinned Catholic Parishes of Malabar-Matraville.

Last weekend at St Agnes' Parish, Matraville 45 of our parish community received Jesus for the first time in Holy

Communion. I wish to congratulate those who made their 1st Holy Communion. I also, wish to thank their parents/carers in bringing their children to this important Sacrament of initiation. The Teachers and Catechists of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary and State Schools of Matraville Parish, a huge thank you, and together with the Parishioners of St Agnes' who ministered at this special Mass and the wonderful parish choir, under the direction of Mrs Martina Rotta who through their signing enhanced such a beautiful liturgy. Let us pray that these our 1st Holy Communion class of Matraville 2023 will regularly attend our Sunday liturgy and receive Jesus regularly with their families.

This Sunday it is the turn of St Andrew's Parish to have their 1st Holy Communion Masses. There will be two extra Parish Masses at St Andrew's 10.15am & 12 Noon. There will be 32 candidates at each Mass. Let us keep them in our prayers.

Father Paul will be away this weekend and we are grateful for the Sacred Heart Priests of Kensington in assisting in supplying for our Masses this weekend at Malabar & Matraville. Towards the end of the 10.00am Mass at St Agnes' Matraville a special blessing to John & Michelle Viselli who will be departing on a long holiday into and across Australia.



I am hoping shortly to meet up with those who were interested in formulating grouping of the Welcome and Hospitality ministry.

Our first Alpha program has now concluded, I hope those who participated, received much nourishment from this program. I wish to thank Mrs Frances Adabbo for her leadership in leading such a fruitful program.

God bless and keep you all in God's love.

Fr John

Please see Parish websites for further notices.

A message from the Archdiocese of Sydney: Child sexual abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with crimes are the police. If you, or anyone you know, have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office at (02) 9390 5810 or safeguarding.enquiries@sydneycatholic.org. You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance. The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.