

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Book of Sirach calls the people of the Old Testament to be generous with forgiveness. Even with those who are unjust. In this way one can expect forgiveness from God for their own offenses. The prophet points out that one should expect from the Lord the same measure of mercy and forgiveness they are willing to show. The lesson being taught includes remembering one's own death and to be prepared to meet the Lord having obeyed the commandments regarding love of God and neighbor.

St. Paul in this small passage from his letter to the Romans wishes to make clear that we belong to the Lord whether in life or in death. He is the Master and we the servants. Christ's death and resurrection illuminates for us the truth that He and He alone is Lord of all.

Matthew 18, verses 21-35 brings forth for us the reality that God will certainly judge us according to how we have treated others. The parable of the master and the servant offered by Jesus to Peter removes the limit on forgiveness. God is willing to forgive us whenever we sin, and in turn we are to deal with one another in the same manner. Forgiveness is not merely for those who deserve it but for anyone who seeks it.

Perhaps these lessons from the Sacred Scripture might give us pause to think of those who have wronged us and offer complete and total forgiveness. This means no conditions set and no punishment or retribution even if deserved. Forgiving in this way will mark us as true disciples of Jesus and merit for us the forgiveness we so often seek.

Peace,

Fr. Robert

