

## Prayers and Readings for Private Use

### Sunday 13 September 2020 – Fourteenth Sunday in the “Trinity” Season

By using this sheet at home, you are joining other local Christians in the worship of God and sharing in our common prayer at a time of national need. You may like to light a candle as you pray.

Jesus said: “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”

*Luke 6:37*

#### Approaching God

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

God the Father forgives us in Christ and heals us by the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore acknowledge our sins before God.

Lord, forgive us when we put our own needs first.

**Jesus, lead us into life.**

Lord, forgive us when we choose to do wrong.

**Jesus, lead us into life.**

Lord, forgive us when we treat others badly

**Jesus, lead us into life.**

Lord, forgive us when we do nothing as others are treated badly or are in need.

**Jesus, lead us into life.**

Lord, set us free from sin,  
and teach us to serve you.

**Jesus, lead us into life.**

May the God of love and power forgive us  
and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us  
by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our  
Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, whose only Son has opened for us  
a new and living way into your presence:  
give us pure hearts and steadfast wills  
to worship you in spirit and in truth;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

#### Listening for God: Matthew 18: 21-35

Peter came and said to Jesus, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

#### *The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant*

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

#### Thought for the Day

*“Forgive our sins as we forgive”, you taught us, Lord, to pray; but you alone can grant us grace to live the words we say’ (verse 1 of the hymn by Rosamond Herklots). In the challenge of forgiveness, we are to pray for grace to forgive one another knowing that we too are forgiven.*

Today's passage from Matthew's Gospel starts with Jesus answering Peter's question 'how many times should we forgive?', and in his response, Jesus reveals that forgiveness is not so much about counting - about a number, or a check-list ... but instead must become a way of life. The number doesn't matter, it is about ongoing discipleship - about forgiving endlessly as God forgives us.

The passage ends with his words: 'if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart' ... Our call is to forgive, and know ourselves forgiven. We know of course, all too well, how hard the challenge to forgive can be. But also know that the act of forgiveness is freeing, not only for the one who receives it ... but also for the one who does the forgiving. (Indeed, research shows that "forgiveness not only reduces anger, depression, anxiety, and fear - but benefits the cardiovascular system"!) Forgiveness happens both internally within ourselves, and externally as we engage with other people. And we are reminded this morning, in Jesus' Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, of the damage and hurt that result from the inability to do so. Those amazing words of Nelson Mandela as he walked to freedom after nearly three decades of imprisonment come to mind: "As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison."

Jesus' saving actions on the cross, and in the resurrection, show that sin and death do not have the final word; in God is all life and love and forgiveness ... and we are called to live that truth. Let us use the final verse of that hymn by Rosamond Herklots as a prayer this morning: *'Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls, and bid resentment cease. Then, bound to all in bonds of love, our lives will spread your peace.'*

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### Response

Merciful God, your Son came to save us and bore our sins on the cross: may we trust in your mercy and know your love, rejoicing in the righteousness that is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

### Prayers

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me bring love.

Where there is offence, let me bring pardon.  
Where there is discord, let me bring union.  
Where there is error, let me bring truth.  
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.  
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.  
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light.  
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.  
O Master, let me not seek as much  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love,  
for it is in giving that one receives,  
it is in self-forgetting that one finds,  
it is in pardoning that one is pardoned,  
it is in dying that one is raised to eternal life. Amen

*Prayer of St Francis*

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from  
your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

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.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.

May God the Holy Trinity make us strong in faith  
and love, defend us on every side,  
and guide us in truth and peace.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God, and the fellowship of the  
Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

May we go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.  
**Amen.**