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## READINGS

Genesis 50:15-21

Psalm 103:8-13

Romans 14:1-12

Matthew 18:21-35

## OPENING PRAYER

O God, most high, most holy,  
you are slow to anger  
and rich in compassion.  
Keep alive in us  
the remembrance of your mercy,  
that our angers may be calmed  
and our resentments dispelled.  
We ask this through your Son,  
our Lord, Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of peace,  
at this table we have been reconciled to you  
and to one another.  
May we who have been nourished by holy things  
always have the courage to forgive.  
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

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FIRST READING: Genesis 50:15-21

*A Reading from the Book of Genesis.*

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" So they approached Joseph, saying, 'Your father gave this instruction before he died: "Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you." Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.'

Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

*Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.*

***Thanks be to God.***

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PSALM 103:8-13

God is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**God will not always accuse,  
nor remain angry forever.**

God does not deal with us according to our sins,  
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

**For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is God's steadfast love towards those who fear God;**

as far as the east is from the west,  
so far does God remove our transgressions from us.

**As children are held by the love of their parents,  
so are we held by the love of our God.**

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SECOND READING: Romans 14:1-12

*A Reading from the Letter to the Romans.*

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarrelling with them over their opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgement on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own ruler that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for our God is able to make them stand.

Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of our God. Also those who eat, eat in honour of our God, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of our God, and give thanks to God.

We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to God, and if we die, we die to God; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the God's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be ruler of both the dead and the living.

So why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before God's judgement seat. For it is written,

‘As I live, says our God, every knee shall bow to me,  
and every tongue shall give me praise.’

So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

*Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.*

***Thanks be to God.***

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GOSPEL READING: Matthew 18:21-35

*The Lord be with you.*

***And with thy spirit.***

*The Holy Gospel*

*of our Lord Jesus Christ*

*according to Matthew.*

***Glory be to Thee, O Lord.***

*God be with you.*

***And also with you.***

*The Good News*

*of Jesus Christ*

*according to Matthew.*

***Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.***

Peter came and said to Jesus, "Lord, if a brother or sister 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!"

Then Jesus went on. "For this reason the realm of heaven may be compared to a ruler who wished to settle accounts with the slaves. When the ruler began the reckoning, one who owed ten thousand talents was brought in; and, as he could not pay, his ruler ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment be made. So the slave fell on his knees before his ruler, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." And out of pity for him, the ruler 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. Seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay me 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; and then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt.

"When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to the ruler all that had taken place. Then the ruler 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 ruler handed him over to be tormented until he should pay his entire debt. So our

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heavenly Ruler will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

*The Gospel of Christ.*

***Praise be to Thee, O Christ.***

*The Gospel of Christ.*

***Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.***