Readings + 16th Sunday after Pentecost, Lect. 24 A + Sept. 13, 2026

Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

First Reading Genesis 50:15-21

5 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?" 16 So they approached
Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction
before he died, 17 '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. 18 Then his brothers also wept, fell down
before him, and said, "We are here as your
slaves." 19 But Joseph said to them, "Do not be
afraid! Am I in the place of God? 20 Even though
you intended to do harm to me, God intended it
for good, in order to preserve a numerous people,
as God is doing today. 21 So have no fear; I myself
will provide for you and your little ones." In this
way Joseph reassured them, speaking kindly to
them.

Psalmody Psalm 103:1-13

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all God's benefits—

who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases;

who redeems your life from the grave and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy;

who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.

O LORD, you provide vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.

You made known your ways to Moses and your works to the children of Israel.

LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

you will not always accuse us, nor will you keep your anger forever.

You have not dealt with us according to our sins, nor repaid us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.

As far as the east is from the west, so far have you removed our transgressions from us.

As a father has compassion for his children, so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.

Second Reading Romans 14:1-12

Paul writes: 1 Welcome those who are weak in
faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over
opinions. 2 Some believe in eating anything, while
the weak eat only vegetables. 3 Those who eat
must not despise those who abstain, and those
who abstain must not pass judgment on those
who eat; for God has welcomed them. 4 Who are
you to pass judgment on slaves of another? It is
before their own lord that they stand or fall. And
they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make
them stand.

5 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.
6 Those who observe the day, observe it for the
Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since
they give thanks to God; while those who abstain,
abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God.

7 For we do not live to ourselves, and we do
not die to ourselves. 8 If we live, we live to the
Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then,
whether we live or whether we die, we are the
Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived
again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead
and the living.

10 Why do you pass judgment on your sibling?
Or you, why do you despise your sibling? For we

will all stand before the judgment seat of God.
11 For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every
knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give
praise to God." 12 So then, each one of us will be
held accountable.

Holy Gospel Matthew 18:21-35

Only Matthew has this parable about radical forgiveness. Luke does include a version of verse 22 (how many times to forgive), but without Peter's initial question. In Luke, Jesus says forgive seven times. Here, in Matthew, Peter starts at seven, and Jesus asks for seventy-seven times. It is possible that the Greek here is an abbreviation, which would make the translation "seventy times seven," or 490, but consensus seems to be to read it as seventy-seven. Either way, it's a lot of forgiveness.

21 Peter came and said to Jesus, "Lord, if my
sibling sins against me, how often should I
forgive? As many as seven times?" 22 Jesus said to
him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-
seven times.

23 "For this reason the reign of heaven may be
compared to a king who wished to settle accounts
with his slaves. 24 When he began the reckoning,
one who owed him ten thousand talents was
brought to him; 25 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. 26 So the slave fell on his
knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me,
and I will pay you everything.' 27 And out of pity
for him, the lord of that slave released him and
forgave him the debt. 28 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.' 29 Then his
fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him,
'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' 30 But
he refused; then he went and threw him into
prison until he would pay the debt. 31 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. 32 Then his lord
summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked
slave! I forgave you all that debt because you
pleaded with me. 33 Should you not have had
mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on
you?' 34 And in anger his lord handed him over to
be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. 35
So my heavenly Father will also do to every one
of you, if you do not forgive each other from
your heart."