

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

You must not bear hatred for your brother in your heart.  
*First Reading (Leviticus 19:17)*

It is he who forgives all your guilt...The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy (*Psalms 102*)

Didn't you realise that you were God's temple?...you belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God. *Second Reading*

(*1 Corinthians: 3:16-23*)

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.  
*Gospel (Matthew 5: 38-48)*



HOW DOES THIS  
IMAGE HELP ME IN  
MY PRAYER LIFE?

### REFLECTIONS

What does the week hold for me, and how do I feel God may be calling me?

What do I want to ask of God for myself or others?

Is there someone with whom it may be helpful to share my reflections this week?



AMDG  
7TH SUNDAY OF  
ORDINARY TIME  
YEAR A  
19 FEBRUARY 2017



**The Lord is compassion and love**

### OPENING PRAYER

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that,  
always pondering spiritual things,  
we may carry out in both word and deed  
that which is pleasing to you.

*I take time to realize that I am in the presence of my loving, compassionate creator. The readings this Sunday invite us to be more like our God in word and deed by refusing to take revenge on those who have wronged us.*

In the first reading from Leviticus we are invited to imitate God by being holy. The best way is to refuse to bear grudges. Let us speak clearly when we are offended. Finally, we must have the same love for others as for ourselves.

The psalm reminds us that God never withdraws love. God is not waiting to punish us and does not want us to feel guilty. He wants us to realize we are loved and forgiven.

The second reading explains that holiness is about respect and living in harmony, not division. To be wise in Christian terms is to realize our dependence on God.

In the Gospel passage, Jesus begins with the laws and customs already in place and asks his listeners to stretch their compassion. Jews were already obliged, for instance, to carry the heavy weapons of the Roman soldiers for one mile. Now they should go two miles. Leviticus had asked them to love their neighbour. Now this must include their enemies. This is how they are to imitate their Creator God.

Prepared by St Beuno's Outreach in the  
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LDS

## PSALM 102

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.

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.

The Lord is compassion and love,  
slow to anger and rich in mercy.  
He does not treat us according to our sins  
nor repay us according to our faults.

As far as the east is from the west,  
so far does he remove our sins.  
As a father has compassion on his sons,  
The Lord has pity on those who fear him.

David recognizes with gratitude that God's ways are not our ways. We may make our mistakes but we can still feel held in love. It is as though we are in the arms of a loving parent. Jesus would have often prayed this psalm and it must have helped him to describe our deep, loving awe and respect for God.

I may like to imagine I am praying this psalm with Jesus, or I may just read the text slowly and prayerfully. I recall the events of the past week. Does this text stir me to share my feelings with God in my own way?

How have I experienced compassion recently? Has there been some healing in my life? What have I learnt? I give thanks for that. Perhaps I am being called to show compassion or to forgive someone? I may now wish to spend some time in complete silence, and finally speak to the Lord from my heart.

## THE GOSPEL: MATTHEW 5: 38-48

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You have learnt how it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say to you: offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if a man takes you to law and would have your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two miles with him. Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

'You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest men alike. For if you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit? Even tax collectors do as much, do they not? And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much, do they not? You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

I choose a time and place where I can give my attention just to Jesus and his word to me today. Jesus begins by speaking about the moral and legal requirements of his time but asks his disciples to go further and become really compassionate, become more like God, in fact. I notice how he is in touch with their reality and yet challenges them. In my own time and place, what might Jesus be inviting me to do? Maybe I live in a part of the world where there has been conflict? Can I decide to forgive those who have persecuted or hurt my family and friends? Perhaps I can try to be more compassionate and understanding, rather than defensive? Since all this is very hard, I allow Jesus to prompt me gently to see how I can live his values in my life. I might want to have a conversation with him about how I can move forward. I ask for the grace to become more like God, more able to forgive.