

**Reflection on the Gospel-24th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A
(Matthew 18:21-35)**

-Veronica Lawson RSM

While the opening verses of this Sunday's gospel reading have Jesus advocating endless forgiveness (not seven but seventy-seven times), the parable that follows is anything but consistent with this teaching and the teaching of Jesus in the gospel as a whole. We are all familiar with the beatitude, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall be mercied" (5:7) and with the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (6:12).

How then do we read today's story of a king who is prepared initially to forgive the debt that his slave has incurred, only to resort to torture when that slave fails to forgive his fellow slave? This story raises more problems than we can address in this short reflection: the unquestioning acceptance of slavery and the plight of slaves; the absolute power of the king over his subjects; the institution of debt slavery; the treatment of women and children; the collection of crippling taxes to finance the power of the king; an unjust and cruel ruler as an image of the God of Israel; imaging God as a loving father who nonetheless acts in tyrannical ways. In other words, the parable encodes institutions and practices of the time that Jesus and/or the Matthean community seem to accept without question.

Does this parable come from the lips of Jesus or from the Matthean community? It would be anachronistic to expect a critique of slavery from Jesus or from Matthew's community since the institution of slavery was simply taken for granted. It persisted without critique for some 1800 years. It is totally out of character, however, for Jesus to image his "heavenly Father" as a merciless torturer. It may be that Jesus did in fact tell such a story in another context and that the Matthean author has rather arbitrarily linked the sayings on forgiveness (forgiving 77 times and forgiving brothers and sisters from one's heart) with this story. It is conceivable that Jesus insisted on the consequences of refusing to forgive. While God is merciful and forgiving, disciples must not exploit God's capacity to forgive. Bad behaviour is not to be tolerated. It has its consequences and those who continually fail to forgive can expect to suffer the consequences of their actions.

Whatever we make of the story of the less than forgiving king and the unforgiving slave, we might take on board Jesus' response to Peter's question. "How often should I forgive?" We might also note the reminder at the end of the gospel that true forgiveness is "from the heart". In the biblical world, the heart was the core of the person's being, the seat of cognition as well as of emotion. To forgive from the heart is to forgive with the whole of one's being.

BULLETIN FOR THE 24th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



ST ALIPIUS PARISH, BALLARAT EAST

Including St Peter & Paul's, Buninyong

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**MASS TIMETABLE FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING
MONDAY, 18th SEPTEMBER 2017**

MONDAY:	No Mass
TUESDAY:	5.00 pm in Mercy Centre
WEDNESDAY:	No Mass
THURSDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church
FRIDAY:	9.30 am in Parish Church

NEXT WEEKEND'S MASSES

ST. ALIPIUS	SAT	6.00 PM
	SUN	10.30 AM
BUNINYONG	SUN	9.00 AM

25th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, YEAR A

READINGS	First: Isaiah 55:6-9
	Second: Philippians 1:20-24.27
	Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

RECENT DEATHS: Ryan Myers.

ANNIVERSARIES: Bill Armstrong, John Nolan, Michael Dwyer, Mary Roach, Richard Purchell, Fred Harrison, Jack Roach, Michael Carter, Gladys Ashmore, Mary Curran, Demetria Patatal.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Nathan Cambell, Denise Learmonth, Cath Wheelahan, Terry McGarry, Kevin Walsh, Peter Clohesy, Frank Nolan (Buninyong), Mary Barnett, Fiona Dickinson, Carmel Doherty, Pauline Murphy, Luke Taylor, Mary Martin, Patricia Harman, Mary Goossens.

COUNTING TEAMS:

This Week: **Team 4:** C. Tarquino ©, M. Tarquino.
Next Week: **Team 5:** J. Moran ©, B. Forbes, C. Napoli.

COLLECTIONS LAST WEEKEND:

PARISH:	Envelopes:	\$ 1,474.20
	Loose:	\$ 300.00
	Direct Debits:	\$ <u>750.00</u>
		\$ 2,524.20
PRESBYTERY:		\$ 627.00



PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

“God my creator breathe on me again, Renew me, Refresh me, extend my abilities. Body and Blood of Jesus Christ flow through every fibre of my being, keep me well. O Holy Spirit use me. Amen”

We offer this prayer to you as an opportunity of thanks and praise for the gift of the Eucharist. It will be displayed on the screen after the communion hymn. We invite you to enter into the silence of these few precious moments.

PASTORAL LETTER

Limited copies of a pastoral letter from Bishop Paul are available in the church foyer which offers some reflections about marriage, drawing on the writings of Pope Francis. Copies of the letter will also be available in diocesan e-news and on the diocesan website.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

On September 1st Christian Churches (Major Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican, Uniting and Protestant) around the world came together to celebrate **World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation** and the start of the **Season of Creation** between September 1st to October 4th, the feast of St Francis of Assisi.

An ecumenical service to complete the **Season of Creation 2017** will be held at OLHC Parish, Wendouree, on Sunday October 1st at 2.30 pm. Afternoon tea to follow. All Welcome.

**2018 PILGRIMAGE
EASTERN EUROPE TO MEDJUGORJA**

See notice board for full details, including itinerary of this pilgrimage in May 2018. Enquiries to Jeremy at jbride@internode or phone 0438 347 226.

ST ALIPIUS COMMUNITY BALL

The fundraising committee at St Alipius Primary School are currently organising a school ball and would like to extend the invitation to the whole St Alipius Community.

When: Saturday, 21st October, 7 pm—late
Where: Victoria Bowls Club
Cost: \$30 per ticket, supper provided.
Live Band

Tickets will be available from the school office.

**30TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION OF
FR. GARY JONES**

The Parish of St Peter's Daylesford will be celebrating the 30th Anniversary of Fr. Gary's ordination at 10.30 am Mass on Sunday, 15th October followed by morning tea in the Parish Centre. All welcome.

Please *RSVP* to daylesford@ballarat.catholic.org.au to assist with catering.

ST VINCENT de PAUL

Each Monday evening between 7.30 and 8.30 a team of volunteers deliver bread to homes across the parish. We are currently looking for at least 2 people to join this team. If you are interested or would like further information please phone Geoff Clarkson on 5340 0782.

**DAMASCUS COLLEGE ENROLMENT
INFORMATION EVENING & OPEN MORNINGS**

Damascus College warmly invites all families to attend our upcoming Information Evening and Open Mornings. The Information Evening will include a tour of the College, activities for students and an information session for parents.

Open Mornings are guided tours by Damascus students during school hours.

INFORMATION EVENING: Thursday, 26th October at 6.30 pm
Please arrive at 6.15 pm for registration.

OPEN MORNINGS: Thursday, 2nd and 9th November, 9 am -10.30 am

**STUDENTS OF ALL AGES ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND
PLEASE REGISTER YOUR ATTENDANCE THROUGH
THE DAMASCUS WEBSITE www.damascus.vic.edu.au**

**DAMASCUS COLLEGE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS
OF MERCY EDUCATION ON OUR BEAUTIFUL SITE**

Date & Time: Saturday, 28 October 2017, 2 pm—5 pm
Registration: Opens at 1.30 pm. Please arrive early to find a car park and register
Refreshment: Afternoon tea will be provided
Venue: Damascus College, 1412 Geelong Road, Mt Clear
RSVP: Friday, 27th October.
Register your attendance at www.damascus.vic.edu.au