

Reading for Weekday in Ordinary Time

13th August 2026

First reading

Ezekiel 12:1-12

‘You shall go like an exile from your place.’

The word of the Lord came to me: ‘Son of man, you dwell in the midst of a rebellious house, who have eyes to see, but see not, who have ears to hear, but hear not, for they are a rebellious house. As for you, son of man, prepare for yourself an exile’s baggage, and go into exile by day in their sight. You shall go like an exile from your place to another place in their sight. Perhaps they will understand, though they are a rebellious house. You shall bring out your baggage by day in their sight, as baggage for exile, and you shall go out yourself at evening in their sight, as those do who must go into exile. In their sight dig through the wall, and bring your baggage out through it. In their sight you shall lift the baggage upon your shoulder and carry it out at dusk. You shall cover your face that you may not see the land, for I have made you a sign for the house of Israel.’

And I did as I was commanded. I brought out my baggage by day, as baggage for exile, and in the evening I dug through the wall with my own hands. I brought out my baggage at dusk, carrying it on my shoulder in their sight.

In the morning the word of the Lord came to me: ‘Son of man, has not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said to you, “What are you doing?” Say to them, “Thus says the Lord God: This oracle concerns the prince in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel who are in it.” Say, “I am a sign for you: as I have done, so shall it be done to them. They shall go into exile, into captivity.” And the prince who is among them shall lift his baggage upon his shoulder at dusk, and shall go out. They shall dig through the wall to bring him out through it. He shall cover his face, that he may not see the land with his eyes.’

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 78(77):56-57. 58-59. 61-62. R cf. 7b

Never forget the deeds of the Lord!

With defiance they tested God Most High; they refused to obey his decrees.

They strayed, as faithless as their fathers; they betrayed him like a treacherous bow.

They provoked God to wrath with their high places, made him jealous with the idols they served.

God heard this and was filled with fury; he utterly rejected Israel.

He gave his strength into captivity, his splendour to the hands of the foe.

He gave up his people to the sword, and showed his anger against his heritage.

Gospel Acclamation

Psalm 119(118):135

Alleluia, alleluia.

Let your face shine forth on your servant,

and teach me your decrees.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 18:21-19:1

‘I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.’

At that time: Peter came up and said to Jesus, ‘Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.’

‘Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.” And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, “Pay what you owe.” So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, “Have patience with me, and I will pay you.” He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him and said to him, “You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?” And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.’

Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.

Short reflection on the reading for today

Learning to forgive those who have hurt us is probably one of the greatest challenges in life. Peter’s question to Jesus as the beginning of the gospel comes of out that sense of how difficult it is to forgive someone, ‘How often must I forgive my brother?’ The implication of his question is that there has to be a limit to forgiveness. Peter decides to err on the generous side, suggesting seven times would be often enough. In the biblical culture of the time, seven was considered to be the complete number. To forgive seven times is complete forgiveness; surely, no more could be asked of someone. Yet, Jesus does ask more, not seven times, but seventy seven times. There is to be no limit to our willingness to forgive. Jesus underpins this very challenging call with the parable that he tells. In that parable the servant owes his master ten thousand talents. This was a massive sum of money, equivalent to billions of euro today. It simply could never be paid back. In the parable the master felt so sorry for his servant that he simply cancelled the debt completely. Here we have the triumph of grace over justice. There is an image here of the gracious and generous way that God deals with us. Jesus reveals a God whose mercy triumphs over justice. The most memorable image of such a God is the father in the story of the prodigal son. The remainder of the parable in today’s gospel tells us that we must allow the mercy that God freely pours into our lives to flow through us to touch others. This is what the servant who was forgiven failed to do. One of the sayings of Jesus expresses the message of today’s parable very succinctly, ‘Be merciful as your Father is merciful.’