

## Reading for Weekday in the Third Week of Lent

March 10th 2026

### First reading

**Daniel 3:25, 34-43**

**‘With a contrite heart and a humble spirit may we be accepted.’**

In those days: Azariah stood and offered this prayer, in the midst of the fire he opened his mouth and said: ‘For your name’s sake do not give us up utterly and do not break your covenant and do not withdraw your mercy from us, for the sake of Abraham your beloved and for the sake of Isaac your servant and Israel your holy one, to whom you promised to make their descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the shore of the sea. For we, O Lord, have become fewer than any nation and are brought low this day in all the world because of our sins. And at this time there is no prince or prophet or leader, no whole burnt offering or sacrifice or oblation or incense, no place to make an offering before you or to find mercy. Yet with a contrite heart and a humble spirit may we be accepted, as though it were with whole burnt offerings of rams and bulls and with tens of thousands of fat lambs; such may our sacrifice be in your sight this day, and may it accomplish after you, for there will be no shame for those who trust in you. And now with all our heart we follow you, we fear you and seek your face. Do not put us to shame, but deal with us in your forbearance and in your abundant mercy. Deliver us in accordance with your marvellous works and give glory to your name, O Lord!’

### Responsorial Psalm

**Ps 25(24):4-5b. 6-7. 8-9. R6a**

*Remember your compassion, O Lord.*

O Lord, make me know your ways.

Teach me your paths.

Guide me in your truth, and teach me;

for you are the God of my salvation.

Remember your compassion, O Lord,

and your merciful love, for they are from of old.

In your merciful love remember me,

because of your goodness, O Lord.

Good and upright is the Lord;

therefore he shows the way to sinners.

He guides the humble in right judgement;

to the humble he teaches his way.

### Gospel Acclamation

**Joel 2:12-13**

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God.

Even now, says the Lord,

return to me with all your heart,

for I am gracious and merciful.

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God.

## **Gospel**

### **Matthew 18:21-35**

**‘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.’

### **Short reflection on the reading for today**

Peter has a high profile in Matthew’s gospel. It is only there that Jesus addresses him as the rock on which he will build his church. It is only in Matthew that we find Peter asking the question, “Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?” In the Scriptures, seven is a symbol of fullness and completion. While to forgive someone seven times would seem about as far as one could possibly go, still Jesus said that we should forgive seventy seven times. In other words, there is to be no limit to our willingness to forgive.

Of course Jesus was well aware of the human tendency was to put strict limits on forgiveness, as is clear in the parable he told to Peter and the others. In that story, even the fortunate person who had been generously forgiven a huge debt could not find it in his heart to forgive another to a much lesser extent. Foremost in Jesus’ mind is how forgiving God was. In today’s gospel he calls on Peter and on all of us to be God-like in our readiness to forgive. This re-echoes what he said earlier in Matthew’s account, “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”