

7th Sunday of the Year C

*Be compassionate
as your Father is compassionate! (Lk 6:36)*



First Reading

1 Samuel 26:2.7-9.12-13.22-23

Saul set off and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, accompanied by three thousand men chosen from Israel to search for David in the wilderness of Ziph. So in the dark David and Abishai made their way towards the force, where they found Saul asleep inside the camp, his spear stuck in the ground beside his head, with Abner and the troops lying round him.

Then Abishai said to David, "Today God has put your enemy in your power; so now let me pin him to the ground with his own spear. Just one stroke! I will not need to strike him twice." David answered Abishai, "Do not kill him, for who can lift his hand against the Lord's anointed and be without guilt?" David took the spear and the pitcher of water from beside Saul's head, and they made off. No one saw, no one knew, no one woke up; they were all asleep, for a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen on them.

David crossed to the other side and halted on the top of the mountain a long way off; there was a wide space between them. David then called out, "Here is the king's spear. Let one of the soldiers come across and take it. The Lord repays everyone for his uprightness and loyalty. Today the Lord put you in my power, but I would not raise my hand against the Lord's anointed."

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15:45-49

The first man, Adam, as scripture says, became a living soul; but the last Adam has become a life-giving spirit. That is, first the one with the soul, not the spirit, and after that, the one with the spirit. The first man, being from the earth, is earthly by nature; the second man is from heaven. As this earthly man was, so are we on earth; and as the heavenly man is, so are we in heaven. And we, who have been modelled on the earthly man, will be modelled on the heavenly man.

Jesus said to his disciples: "But I say this to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly. To the man who slaps you on one cheek, present the other cheek too; to the man who takes your cloak from you, do not refuse your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask for your property back from the man who robs you. Treat others as you would like them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks can you expect? For even sinners do that much. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what thanks can you expect? Even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same amount. Instead, love your enemies and do good, and lend without any hope of return. You will have a great reward, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged yourselves; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned yourselves; grant pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap; because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back."

Meditation

In Tobit's instruction to his son he says, "Do to no one what you yourself dislike" (Tb 4:15). Jesus did not rest content with this attitude. He calls us to a more profound transformation of heart. "Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; do to others what you would have them do to you!" From now on, no one is to be excluded from our love, not even avowed enemies. Charity must not be quibbling or calculating love. It is more than humanitarian virtue. Jesus is the ultimate expression of divine mercy. He pardoned his executioners from the cross. Only in following his example are we capable of responding to hatred with good, to curses with blessing, to ill-treatment with prayer. To love in this way is to love the other into life. It is to invest our love freely, without seeking return. It is to love with eyes open for what is unique and good in each person. It is to love by giving up the last word, by accepting the risk of being duped, by knowing how to pardon beyond calculation.