

The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost 9-13-20

Deliver me from my enemies, O LORD!

I have fled to you for refuge!

Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my pleas for mercy!

In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

Enter not into judgment with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

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Collect

O God, our refuge and strength, the author of all godliness, hear the devout prayers of Your Church, especially in times of persecution, and grant that what we ask in faith we may obtain; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

[Genesis 50:15-21] But now that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers became afraid. "Now Joseph will pay us back for all the evil we did to him," they said. ¹⁶ So they sent this message to Joseph: "Before your father died, he instructed us ¹⁷ to say to you: 'Forgive your brothers for the great evil they did to you.' So we, the servants of the God of your father, beg you to forgive us." When Joseph received the message, he broke down and wept. ¹⁸ Then his brothers came and bowed low before him. "We are your slaves," they said. ¹⁹ But Joseph

told them, "Don't be afraid of me. Am I God, to judge and punish you? ²⁰ As far as I am concerned, God turned into good what you meant for evil. He brought me to the high position I have today so I could save the lives of many people. ²¹ No, don't be afraid. Indeed, I myself will take care of you and your families." And he spoke very kindly to them, reassuring them.

[Romans 14:1-9] Accept Christians who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong. ² For instance, one person believes it is all right to eat anything. But another believer who has a sensitive conscience will eat only vegetables.

³ Those who think it is all right to eat anything must not look down on those who won't. And those who won't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them. ⁴ Who are you to condemn God's servants? They are responsible to the Lord, so let him tell them whether they are right or wrong. The Lord's power will help them do as they should. ⁵ In the same way, some think one day is more holy than another day, while others think every day is alike. Each person should have a personal conviction about this matter. ⁶ Those who have a special day for worshiping the Lord are trying to honor him. Those who eat all kinds of food do so to honor the Lord, since they give thanks to God before eating. And those who won't eat everything also want to please the Lord and give thanks to God. ⁷ For we are not our own masters when we live or when we die. ⁸ While we live, we

live to please the Lord. And when we die, we go to be with the Lord. So in life and in death, we belong to the Lord. ⁹ Christ died and rose again for this very purpose, so that he might be Lord of those who are alive and of those who have died.

[Matthew 18:21-35] Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone¹ who sins against me? Seven times?" ²² "No!" Jesus replied, "seventy times seven!" ²³ "For this reason, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. ²⁴ In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars.¹ ²⁵ He couldn't pay, so the king ordered that he, his wife, his children, and everything he had be sold to pay the debt. ²⁶ But the man fell down before the king and begged him, 'Oh, sir, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' ²⁷ Then the king was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. ²⁸ "But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars.¹ He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. ²⁹ His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient and I will pay it,' he pleaded. ³⁰ But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and jailed until the debt could be paid in full. ³¹ "When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him what had happened. ³² Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant!

I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?'

³⁴ Then the angry king sent the man to prison until he had paid every penny. ³⁵ "That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters¹ in your heart."