SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23
Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Prayer for the Morning

Let us love one another as Christ loved us;
come, let us adore!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia!

Hymn — Meter: 88 88 with refrain

Faith of our fathers! living still,
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword;
O how our hearts beat high with joy
Whene'er we hear that glorious word!

℟ Faith of our fathers, holy faith!
We will be true to thee till death.

Faith of our fathers! we will love
Both friend and foe in all our strife;
And preach thee, too, as love knows how
By kindly words and virtuous life. ℟

Psalm 14

Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. (Rom 13:8)

Jesus' command to love one another never requires that we like all those we love. The "fool" in the psalm below will never know God unless he is granted the grace of faith. How often do we remember to pray for those who make our lives difficult or unpleasant?

The fool has said in his heart:
"There is no God above."
Their deeds are corrupt, depraved;
not a good man is left.

From heaven the Lord looks down
on the sons of men
to see if any are wise,
if any seek God.

All have left the right path,
depraved, every one:
there is not a good man left,
no, not even one.

Will the evil-doers not understand?
They eat up my people
as though they were eating bread:
they never pray to the Lord.

See how they tremble with fear
without cause for fear:
for God is with the just.
You may mock the poor man's hope,
but his refuge is the Lord.

O that Israel's salvation might come from Zion!
When the Lord delivers his people from bondage,
then Jacob will be glad and Israel rejoice.

Glory to the Father....

Word of God — 1 John 4:10-11

In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another.

Love bears all things, hopes all things,
endures all things. (cf. 1 Cor 13:7)

Canticle of Zechariah — (Text, back cover B)

Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. (Mt 5:44)

Canticle of Zechariah — (Luke 1: 68-79)

The Messiah and his forerunner

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;
he has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty savior,
born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old
that he would save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all who hate us.

He promised to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet
of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen.

Intercessions

Christ's call to love is not an easy one. Remembering our own sinfulness, we pray:

℟ Have mercy on those we fail to love, O Lord!

For all those who are estranged from family members,
– that they might let the love of God soften old feuds and re-form old bonds: ℟

For those who persecute the innocent, especially Christians,
– that they might see the light, as did Saint Paul, and turn to God seeking forgiveness: ℟

For all those we have difficulty forgiving,
– that they might be blessed in abundance despite our failure to intercede for them: ℟

Personal intentions

Our Father….

Merciful Father, who forgive all who hope in your mercy, grant us to love as you love, that we may approach on this earth the heavenly perfection for which you prepare us. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

A reading from the Book of Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18

The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the whole Israelite community and tell them: Be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy.

"You shall not bear hatred for your brother or sister in your heart. Though you may have to reprove your fellow citizen, do not incur sin because of him. Take no revenge and cherish no grudge against any of your people. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians 3:16-23

Brothers and sisters: Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for the temple of God, which you are, is holy.

Let no one deceive himself. If any one among you considers himself wise in this age, let him become a fool, so as to become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the eyes of God, for it is written:

God catches the wise in their own ruses,

and again:

The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

So let no one boast about human beings, for everything belongs to you, Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or the present or the future: all belong to you, and you to Christ, and Christ to God.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 5:38-48

Jesus said to his disciples: "You have heard that it was said, *An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.* But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand over your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go for two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow.

"You have heard that it was said, *You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.* But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Men of St. Joseph Prayer

"St. Joseph, help me to be like you. Help me to be obedient to the teachings of the Church and faithful to God's commands. Help me to patiently endure my cross each day. Let me be a model of holiness and a pillar of virtue. I solemnly promise to embrace God's will and I accept the challenge to work tirelessly for my family's salvation. Be my guide and companion on this journey. St. Joseph, terror of demons, pray for us."