

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, 17 SEPTEMBER 2023

FIRST READING: Exodus 14:19-31 The crossing of the Red Sea

¹⁹ Then the angel of God, who had been travelling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, ²⁰ coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other; so neither went near the other all night long. ²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, ²² and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. ²³ The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. ²⁴ During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. ²⁵ He jammed^[a] the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, 'Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt.' ²⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen.' ²⁷ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing towards^[b] it, and the LORD swept them into the sea. ²⁸ The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen – the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived. ²⁹ But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. ³⁰ That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. ³¹ And when the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.

PSALM 114

¹ When Israel came out of Egypt, Jacob from a people of foreign tongue, ² Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel his dominion. ³ The sea looked and fled, the Jordan turned back; ⁴ the mountains leaped like rams, the hills like lambs. ⁵ Why was it, sea, that you fled? Why, Jordan, did you turn back? ⁶ Why, mountains, did you leap like rams, you hills, like lambs? ⁷ Tremble, earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, ⁸ who turned the rock into a pool, the hard rock into springs of water.

SECOND READING: Romans 14:1-12 The strong and the weak faith

14 Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarrelling over disputable matters. ² One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is

weak, eats only vegetables.³ The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them.⁴ Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.⁵ One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind.⁶ Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.⁷ For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone.⁸ If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.⁹ For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister?^[a] Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.¹¹ It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "Every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God."^[b]¹² So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

GOSPEL: Matthew 18:21-35 Parable of the unforgiving servant

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' ²² Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'^[a] ²³ 'Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold^[b] was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. ²⁶ 'At this the servant fell on his knees before him. "Be patient with me," he begged, "and I will pay back everything." ²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go. ²⁸ 'But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.^[c] He grabbed him and began to choke him. "Pay back what you owe me!" he demanded. ²⁹ 'His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, "Be patient with me, and I will pay it back." ³⁰ 'But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. ³² 'Then the master called the servant in. "You wicked servant," he said, "I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?" ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. ³⁵ 'This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'