

Reflections on 24th Sunday of Year A.

Mass: Ecclesiasticus 27:33-28:9; Psalm 102; Romans 14:7-9; Matthew 18:21-35.

This tale is about relationships. These servants are slaves of a tough if careless master it seems. We sometimes think that the ancient world is like our own capitalist society, with labour sold to the highest bidder. The ancient world was different. Communities were organised around patrons and clients. A community, largely agricultural, needed stable relationships. Loyalty was a vital commodity. We might translate today that loyalty as faith. Clearly this master has relied on his workers to be faithful. To have embezzled 10,000 talents is mega bucks in our terms, probably billions. There is no way that this dodgy slave can ever repay the debt. He is also in the business of lending to others, probably for profit, something forbidden under Jewish law. The awesome generosity of the master is on a par with his massive trust and faithfulness. The dodgy servant betrays that faithfulness in his exploitation of his fellow servant. Thinking of what that means today. We have been gifted with life on an amazing planet. We can abuse God's faith in us by abusing the planet for our own greed, exploiting others on the way. Do we see this great gift as part of our community? This is what faithfulness ultimately means. We owe God untold millions for his gifts to us, faithfulness demands that we share those riches with our human beings, our community.