Tuesday of the Third Week of Lent

Gospel text (*Mt* 18:21-35): Peter approached Jesus and asked him, “Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus answered, “I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.

That is why the Kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount. Since he had no way of paying it back (…), the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.’ Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan..

When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding, ‘Pay back what you owe.’ Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ But he refused. Instead, he had him put in prison (…). His master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! (…), Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?’ (…)."

The Parable of the merciless servant (pardon is only effective for those who can forgive)

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, with the perspective of “the great pardon” of God which Jesus invokes and reaches on the Cross, we understand that only through forgiveness can an offense be cleared, and that forgiveness can only be effective for those who in turn also forgive (as we express when praying the “Lord’s Prayer”). Forgiveness appears continuously through the entire Gospel.

God, taking the initiative, came to meet us in order to reconcile humanity with Him; to achieve forgiveness He paid the price of descending to the miseries of human existence and to death on the Cross. As contrast comes the “Parable of the merciless servant”: this servant had been forgiven the incredible debt of ten thousand talents, however soon after he wasn’t willing to forgive the absurd debt of one hundred denarii, that the other man owed him. Anything we must forgive each other is always small in comparison with the mercy of God who forgives everyone!

—O Lord, help me to remember often Your prayer on the Cross: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”.