

The Work of the People
Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Let us continue to remember in prayer all those whose lives were changed so dramatically by the recent hurricanes, wild-fires, and other natural disasters. While we certainly experience weather challenges, they do not compare to what the people of Hawaii or Florida have gone through – a burden they will continue to bear in these next several months.

Today's First Reading from Sirach continues the topic of forgiving our brothers and sisters. The author's advice, which he gives through theoretical questions, is prudent: Do not grow angry and expect healing from the Lord; do not withhold forgiveness and expect God to forgive you; do not value rage against another in the hopes of your own forgiveness. The author voices the commandment to love in negative terms: do not hate your neighbor. Always remember the covenant and move forward from each other's faults in mercy.

This is the final Sunday we read from Paul's letter to the Romans. The brief two verses are from the next to last chapter in the letter. These verses are a summation of sorts of Paul's theology in this letter. We belong to no one or nothing else but Christ. Without repeating the reason for why we belong to him, the Romans and we know that it is because through God's grace, Christ freely justifies us. Through Baptism, we died and rose with Christ, and in our new life in Christ, we live for no other. When we die, we also die for the Lord. We live and die in faith. The totality of our new personhood is in Christ.

Today's Gospel is a continuous reading of Matthew from where last Sunday's Gospel left off. Jesus had taught his disciples a process for extending forgiveness to one who sins. Peter now asked Jesus to quantify how many times he must forgive someone. Jesus' numerical response shows that forgiveness is infinite. He then proceeds to tell the parable about a servant whose master offered loan forgiveness, but in turn, the servant refused to forgive a fellow servant. "Forgive" is Jesus' message. How could something be so simple and difficult at the same time?

The reflection for this Sunday is from Pope Francis's *Meditation of Assisi* which he delivered on August 4, 2016.

God's forgiveness knows no limits; it is greater than anything we can imagine, and it comes to all who know in their hearts that they have done

wrong and desire to return to him. God looks at the heart that seeks forgiveness.

The problem, unfortunately, comes whenever we have to deal with a brother or sister who has even slightly offended us. The reaction described in the parable describes it perfectly: "He seized him by the throat and said, 'Pay what you owe!'" (Matt 18:28). Here we encounter all the drama of our human relationships. When we are indebted to others, we expect mercy; but when others are indebted to us, we demand justice! All of us do this. It is a reaction unworthy of Christ's disciples, nor is it the sign of a Christian style of life. Jesus teaches us to forgive and to do so limitlessly: "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times" (v. 22). What he offers us is the Father's love, not our own claims to justice. To trust in the latter alone would not be the sign that we are Christ's disciples who have obtained mercy at the foot of the cross solely by virtue of the love of the Son of God. Let us not forget, then, the harsh saying at the end of the parable: "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart" (v. 35).

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: 1 Tm. 2:1-8/Lk. 7:1-10
 Tuesday: 1 Tm. 3:1-13/Lk. 7:1-11-17
 Wednesday: 1 Tm. 3:14-16/Lk. 7:31-35
 Thursday: Eph. 4:1-7, 11-13/Mt. 9:9-13
 Friday: 1 Tm. 6:2c-12/Lk. 8:1-3
 Saturday: 1 Tm. 6:13-16/Lk. 8:4-15
 Sunday: Is. 55:6-9/Phil. 1:20c-24, 27a/Mt. 20:1-16a

FAITH FORMATION

Sunday - September 24
 Sunday - October 8
 Sunday - October 22

*"Lord,
 the next time I want
 to complain about someone,
 help me to remember
 to pray for them instead!"*

WORSHIP

Monday, September 18
 8:00 am + Jim Rasavage (Carol Rasavage)
 Tuesday, September 19
 8:00 am + Emil Semrad (Semrad/Bain Family)
 Wednesday, September 20
 8:00 am + AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 Living & Deceased Parishioners
 Thursday, September 21
 8:00 am + Albert Mukina (Joan Rembeilak)
 Friday, September 22
 8:00 am + Ron Yusavage (Judy Metzler)
 Saturday, September 23
 4:30 pm + Living & Deceased Parishioners
 Sunday, September 24
 8:00 am + AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 Robin Hogue (Joe & Alice Johnson)
 9:30 am + AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
 Arlinda Santos Ferreira (Ana Maria Leandro)

PARISH EVENTS CALENDAR

Monday, September 18
 5:00 pm - Doors open for BINGO
 Tuesday, September 19
 After Mass - St. Anthony Novena
 Saturday, September 23
 3:30 - 4:15 pm - Confession
 Sunday, September 24
 AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 Before Mass - Confession
 AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
 After Mass - Confession
 10:30 am - Faith Formation Classes

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS
ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA

Saturday, September 23
 Andrea Closky - Judy Kingston
 Sunday, September 24
 Theresa Douglas - Christine Krzysiak

ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
STEWARDSHIP

Offertory	\$797.00
Maintenance	130.00
Candles	6.00
TOTAL	\$933.00

CATHOLIC EDUCATION COLLECTION

Today is the 2023 Catholic Education Collection! Please support this important program that funds faith formation opportunities. Half of what you give will remain at our parish to support our own religious education and faith formation programs. You can make a gift by using the envelop provided in your offertory box. Thank you!

CHILD PROTECTION AND
CREATING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

The Diocese of Erie, is committed to protecting minors who are entrusted to our care. The Diocese has policies and procedures in place to address the national problem of child abuse, to aid in the prevention of abuse and to develop and maintain safe environments. All those who minister to minors are screened, trained, and agree to a Code of Conduct. To read the Policy that includes the Code of Conduct, go to <https://www.eriecd.org/childprotecton/policies-1.html> For more information, contact the diocesan Office for the Protection of Children and Youth at 814 824-1195.

SETON SCHOOL

Seton School is hiring a 3rd grade teacher. If interested call Seton Catholic School at 814 336-2320 or kdavis@seton-school.com

SAEGERTOWN WOMEN'S
IMPROVEMENT CLUB

Invites you and your family to a drive thru Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser on Thursday, September 21 from 3pm - 7pm at the Saegertown United Methodist Church on Euclid Ave. in Saegertown. Suggested donation: \$7 per meal.

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
STEWARDSHIP

Offertory	\$1,426.00
Maintenance	352.00
Donation	25.00
CSA	225.00
Candles	46.00
NSF Service Charge	10.00
Catholic Education	5.00
TOTAL	\$2,089.00

Catholic Services Appeal
 Pledged: \$34,592.33 Paid: \$31,103.33

CHURCH NAME: ST. ANTONY OF PADUA

CHURCH NO.:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
