

Twenty fourth Sunday in ordinary time

Every day a woman stood on her porch and shouted, "praise the Lord". And every day the atheist next door yelled back, "There is no Lord." One day she prayed, "Lord, I am hungry. Please send me groceries."

The next morning, she found a big bag of food on the stairs. "Praise the Lord", she shouted. I told you there was no Lord," her neighbor said, jumping from a bush. I bought those groceries.

"Praise the Lord, the woman said. He not only sent me groceries, but he made the devil pay for them.

Dear friends,

When people hurt us, injure us, our natural reaction is retaliation. It happens in individual cases and social and political world. Some of the social ills that we struggle against result in part from the refusal of people to forgive. Wars are fought and innocent people are killed, maimed, or displaced because people cannot forgive their neighbors for their actions or those of their ancestors. Our own society shows its own refusal to forgive in its obsessive clinging to the death penalty.

Today's liturgy talks about forgiveness and mercy. Those two are more important values of God. God loves us and that's why he forgives us. we are asked to use the same norm in our human life. When we love someone deep, we cannot remain without forgiving.

The first reading from the book of Sirach teaches us to take anger and hatred away from us. we cannot expect a favor from God when we are not able to practice it in our own realm. As we read in the gospel of Luke 6: 37-38, "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." We need to practice what we want from God. If you want healing and pardon, love and Mercy, give the same.

In the second reading, St. Paul clearly tells us that we are not living for ourselves alone. We are living for Christ. Because he came and died for us so that we all can have life.

In the Gospel, Jesus gives a perfect answer to peter's question about forgiveness. God never refuses to forgive because he never refuses to love. We are able to understand the point of this Gospel story if we see the connection between love and forgiveness. Refusing

to forgive is refusing to love, and it is never acceptable not to love. That is why it is never right to withhold forgiveness either. Our human rational doesn't allow it. Take out any events in the history of the world, you can read that in behind the bottom line.

Jesus says forgive somebody from your heart as we love someone from your heart. Those who choose to love must also be willing to forgive wrong and move on. Unconditional love is a blend of love and Mercy. Let us realize how do we pray our father prayer. The prayer is said by Jesus telling, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

I want you to understand two things. Retaliation is not a tool for one who does harm to you. Secondly forgiveness and love exist together. It cannot be separated from your heart.

Questions for Reflections:

1. How can I forgive people by loving?
2. Have I ever had a situation to not to forgive someone?

Nothing is permanent, but God. God is love and let us love everyone and accept everyone.