

**SEPTEMBER 17, 2017
TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Our Gospel this weekend from St. Matthew, reminds us that to be a follower of Christ we must also be agents of forgiveness. When asked by Peter how many times we should forgive our brothers and sisters Jesus replied "not seven times, but seventy-seven times." In the ancient world the number seven represented completeness, so the response seventy-seven times in reality means as many times as is necessary. Then Jesus goes on to give us this wonderful Parable of the Unforgiving Servant.

In this Parable we find out that a debtor owed his King a "huge amount." In more literal translations of the Gospels, we are actually given the sum total of the debt as 10,000 Talents. A Talent was an amount of money equal to 15 years of wages. If you take 15 years of an average person's wages and multiply that by 10,000 you get an amount in current currency somewhere in the low billions. You may wonder how is it that someone was able to get into such enormous debt with the King? As interesting as the answer to this question might be, I think it's even more astonishing to hear that after a little groveling from the debtor, the King forgives the debt! Then we hear that the debtor encounters a fellow servant who owes him "a much smaller amount," and instead of forgiving him as he had been forgiven, the debtor chokes the other servant and has him thrown in jail. Again, a more literal translation of the Gospel tells us that this "smaller amount" is equal to a simple days wages. It doesn't end well for the debtor when the King finds out what he has done. This exchange teaches us a great deal about the nature of forgiveness.

First, forgiveness is like releasing someone from a debt. "You owe me money, but don't

worry, I forgive the debt." In other words, it's about letting go. Letting go of the past, letting go of anger, pain, pride, and you name it. Forgiveness doesn't necessarily mean that we forget it just means that we allow ourselves to move forward without being shackled by the past; one less piece of baggage to carry through life.

Second, the King represents God, which explains his extravagant capacity for forgiveness. Like the debtor we too owe "a huge amount" for every one of us is in need of forgiveness from time to time. If we are sincere and contrite we can find ourselves in the same situation as the debtor, being forgiven by the King. No matter how much we owe or how many times we owe, forgiveness is available to us; "not seven but seventy-seven times."

Finally, this Parable is also a warning to us. Because we are the recipients of God's extravagant mercy and forgiveness we are then tasked to be forgiving of others with the same frequency and capacity as God has shown us. The debtor's behavior is unfortunate and almost unimaginable. Having had such a huge burden lifted from him one would think that the debtor would be overjoyed and generous with those around him. Instead, he squandered what the King had given him and would not forgive someone a fraction of what he had received. In the parable, the debtor's terrible fate illustrates just how egregious his sin was.

Forgiveness is not an option for us, it is something that we must practice. As we all know from experience sometimes it can be very difficult to forgive someone. But, we must always try. Forgiveness like so many other things is a process and depending upon the situation this process can even take a lifetime. Remember, it is about letting go so that we can move forward untethered, in order that we may serve our Lord and neighbor to the best of our ability.

May God bless you,

Monsignor Hurley

SHARE IN THE SPIRIT

Next week, parishioners throughout the diocese will be asked to help make the dream of a Catholic education a reality for struggling Catholic families. Monies raised through this collection coupled with the diocese's tuition assistance endowment provides financial assistance to hundreds of deserving families who seek a Catholic education for their children but who cannot afford the full cost of tuition.

Through this collection, our Bishop is reaching out to believing and worshipping Catholics like you to assist him in ensuring that the Catholic commitment to total education of our children does not fade away because people cannot afford it. Since the Church has the mission to educate and since this mission directly affects the quality of life we experience as Catholics, all of us have a stake in Catholic education.

It is in light of this reality that I ask you to consider supporting next week's *Share in the Spirit* collection. God bless you for your goodness.

JOIN THE BISHOP AT THE "BLUE MASS"

Bishop Malooly invites you to the 2017 Diocese of Wilmington "Blue Mass" on Friday, October 6 at 11:00 a.m. at Saint Elizabeth Church, 809 South Broom Street, Wilmington, Delaware. The "Blue Mass" honors the local, county, state, and federal law enforcement, fire, emergency medical, and military personnel who live and work in Delaware and on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Those currently serving, the retired, and their families are invited to attend.

BAPTISM

For parents who wish to have their babies baptized the next class will take place on Tuesday, November 14, at 7:00pm in the church. For further information and to register, please call the rectory office at 658-5131

LAST WEEKEND'S OFFERTORY
\$3, 377.00
Thank you for your generosity

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, September 18

6:00pm – Gaetano Allesia

Tuesday, September 19

8:00am – Jeanne Bernardez

Wednesday, September 20

8:00am – Roberto Antignani

Thursday, September 21

8:00am – Patricia Toomey

Saturday, September 23

5:00pm – Rose Bruno

Sunday, September 24

8am – Rose Murray

10am – Mass for the People

VOCATION REFLECTION

In today's second reading, St. Paul reminds the Romans (and us) that "None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself. For if we live, we live for the Lord." While that is true for all of the baptized, some are called to live lives consecrated for the service of the Church as priests, deacons or religious. If you think God might be inviting you to some form of consecrated life, please call or write Father Norm Carroll, Diocesan Director of Priestly and Religious Vocations (302-573-3113 or vocations@cdow.org). Be sure to visit our website: www.cdow.org/vocations!

GOD IS ON THE AIR

Listen to Catholic Forum every Sunday morning at 10:05 a.m. on WDEL 101.7 FM, 1150 AM and www.wdel.com. Next Sunday, September 24th, Father Brian Lewis, Associate Pastor of St. Elizabeth Parish in Wilmington, will discuss the upcoming Marian Pilgrimage. For photos, information regarding upcoming guests, podcasts and more, "Like" Catholic Forum at facebook.com/catholicforum. Listen to past episodes of Catholic Forum online at cdow.org/communications or search "Catholic

Forum” on Apple Podcasts or iHeartRadio podcasts.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Marriage Moments: "While a lone man may be overcome, two together can resist. A three-ply cord is not easily broken." (Eccles. 4:12) Bond yourself together as husband and wife. With bringing God into your relationship, you create a three ply cord, giving you the strength that is not easily broken.

Parenting Pointers: Children often complain that a parent, a sibling, or playmate is not being fair - and it may be true. Life is not always fair. Talk with your child about a time when they had an advantage or disadvantage. Share how you cope when something unfair happens.

SAINT MARK'S HIGH SCHOOL

Important Admissions Dates:

8th Grade HSPT Prep course

Saturday, October 14th and November 11th

Fall Open House

Sunday, October 29th from 12:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Spartan for a Day for 8th Grade students

Beginning October 3rd, Tuesday – Friday.

8th Grade HSPT at Saint Mark's

December 2nd at 8:00 a.m. or

December 3rd at 12:00 p.m.

For a full list of admissions dates or to register for an event, visit the Saint Mark's Admissions web-page at www.stmarkshs.net/Admissions

THE ANNUAL RED MASS

The annual Red Mass will be celebrated on Monday, October 2, at 6:00 p.m. at St. Joseph on the Brandywine Church. This is the 30th Annual Celebration of the Red Mass, and the homilist will be Fr. Robert Kennedy, who was homilist for the first diocesan Red Mass.

Dating back to the Middle Ages, the Red Mass is celebrated annually for judges, lawyers, law

professors and students, and government officials. The Mass invokes the gifts of the Holy Spirit for those who seek justice and serve in its administration. Dinner follows in the church hall.

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

“Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; . . . let us joyfully sing psalms to him.” (Psalm 95:1a, 2b) The words of today's Psalm invite you to elevate your hearts, minds, and voices in worship before the God who made you. These words also may inspire you to consider membership in Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish Adult Choir.

The Adult Choir season extends from mid-September to early June. The group sings at the 10:00 a.m. Mass on Sundays and rotates every other month at the 5:00 p.m. Mass on Saturday. They also sing for all the liturgies of the Easter Triduum.

The Adult Choir practices on Wednesdays, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., in the church choir loft and more frequently when preparing for the Christmas season and the Easter Triduum. The first rehearsal of the new year is Wednesday, September 13, 2017.

Additionally, if you are accomplished players of any brass, percussion, string, and/or woodwind instruments, please prayerfully consider sharing your gifts of talent and time with this Community.

For more information about the Adult Choir or Cantors please see Patrice Roman, Parish Music Director, in the choir loft or phone me at 658-5131.

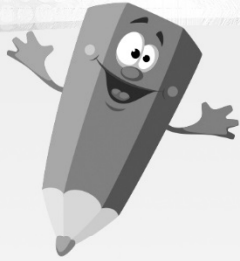
HUSBANDS AND WIVES Only YOU can set marriage fires! Want to find out how to keep yours burning? Take each other on a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend. The next weekend is November. 3-5, 2017. To receive more information or to apply, call Tony and Linda Massino, 302-220-9833

< KID'S > KORNER

Gospel Today

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time | Matthew 18:21-35

Jesus says there should be no limit to the times we forgive, from our hearts, those who treat us unfairly.



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JESUS REMINDS US TO BE FORGIVING

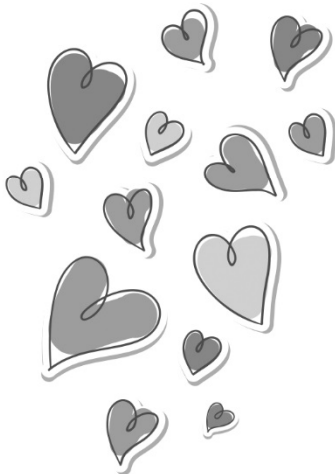
Think of someone you need to forgive.

What symbol would best show what you are feeling?

Love, peace, hugs & kisses or prayer; or are you just proud to be in America.

Design and color your own **FORGIVENESS FLAG**.

With the symbols below, or your own ideas, design a larger flag on a separate piece of paper and hang it in a window.



Forgive from the heart flag

SAMPLE FLAGS



American flag



Peace flag



Praying hands flag