

NOTRE DAME PARISH

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant as I had pity on you?



Any Christian can understand the symbolism in the parable of the unforgiving servant. The king was God the Father. The ungrateful official was a petty Christian living in community. Such a believer

demanded his "fair share" and easily forgot the gift God gave him. Without a sense of mercy, such a Christian disgraced the community and was no better than the unreformed sinner.

MASS INTENTIONS

Saturday, September 12 @ 4PM
Tom, Florence, and young Tom Gately

Sunday, September 13 @ 9:30AM
John Benish, Sr.

Monday, September 14 @ 8AM
Marty Bergerson

Tuesday, September 15 @ 8AM
Szostak, Martonissi, Kazwara families

Wednesday, September 16 @ 8:30AM
Augustus & Margaret Carmody

Thursday, September 17 @ 8:30AM
Hedwig Macudzinski

Friday, September 18 @ 8AM
Teddy Liddell, Steve McDonald

Saturday, September 19 @ 11AM
Memorial Mass for Joe Meel

Saturday, September 19 @ 4PM
Agota & Vincentas Gudaitis

Oremus – Let Us Pray

- For recently deceased parishioner, Eileen Henry
- For firefighters and residents in the wildfires of the western states
- For recovery from Hurricane Laura
- For the cultivation of a pro-life culture that includes human life from conception to natural death
- For all who grieve: that they may be supported by Mary, our Lady of Sorrows
- For protection from COVID-19; for responsible behavior that will slow its spread
- For medical researchers everywhere: that they might find vaccines and cures for many
- For renewed concern about Climate Change

Fatalism Is Not a Christian Virtue

In the course of this pandemic, one hears stoical remarks like “It is what it is.”

Or, statisticians will make observations about what kills people at any other time – e.g. 56,000 flu deaths per year, 34,000 auto fatalities, 607,000 cancer deaths per year, and so on.

These reports carry the insinuation that we should just muddle through, concede that the weakest among us will get sick and die, and go on with our lives as before. They are accepting the Darwinian thesis that the fittest survive; the young, the old, and the weak are destined to fall behind and perish.

This philosophy overflows into Christian life when we assert that everything that

happens, bad or good, is God’s will – it might be a punishment or a blessing, but it is God’s will. This logic contends that God, all-knowing – foresees the future. God makes adjustments, through circumstances, human events, and people to assure that his plan is fulfilled. Human beings are “pre-destined” to heaven or hell. All we must do is sit back and enjoy the ride!

This view diminishes God as well as human dignity. Yes, God has a plan, promised in Christ, to bring about a “New Creation.” God is radically free. Moreover, God gave human beings “free will” to make choices and participate in the adventure of salvation and the advent of



Fatalism is a false premise.

What will be is not necessarily what must be.

Pearl Buck, American author

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Support the 2020 Catholic Services Appeal



COVID-19 stalled the formal launch of the Catholic Services Appeal. This weekend, we will begin our effort to meet our parish goal of \$37,000. Some parishioners have already made their pledge and are recorded as giving or pledging.

Because the Diocese of Gary depends on local parishes to fund the ministries sponsored by the diocese, ministries that generally fall outside parish oversight, this appeal is as necessary as ever before.

You should have received an appeal from the Diocese of Gary in the mail. A return envelope was also provided in your weekly envelope box.

Although the appeal includes a return envelope addressed to the diocese, sending it to the Notre Dame pastoral center assures that your gift will be

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Forgiveness: A Gift from God

Jesus, God's mercy in the flesh, often spoke about forgiveness. He even said that if we expect God to forgive us, then we must forgive others (see Matthew 6:14-15). It's a requirement! Without forgiveness, we can become bitter, and bitterness can lead to other sins. As Christians, we have to forgive everyone – not just other Christians, but everyone.

It is difficult to choose a favorite Scripture passage about the mercy of Jesus – there are so many of them! There is the story about the woman who anointed Jesus' feet and then wiped them with her hair (Luke 7:36-50), the incident about the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:11), or the story about the "good thief" who was crucified with Jesus (Luke 23:39-43). It is even more difficult to choose one among the many actions of Jesus that was

merciful, such as eating with sinners and tax collectors or forgiving those who put him to death. We could say that Jesus was the personification of God's mercy made manifest in human history. This is the first part of the mystery of forgiveness. It is not that we love Christ first, but rather that he loves and forgives us for all the ways that we reject him, turn from him, and run away from him and from each other. The Greek word for "forgiveness" is *isaphienai*, meaning to "loose," "let go," "release," or "omit." It is Christ's free gift.

Jesus forgives because that is his mission. He was sent by the Father so that God's forgiveness would permeate human history. "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our

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properly recorded.

Remember that this appeal funds or subsidizes many essential diocesan-wide programs that serve us all: marriage & family ministry, lay ecclesial ministry, Catholic school assistance, diaconate formation, the priest pension program, pro-life initiatives, Catholic Charities, and much more.

It also contributes to many good works that otherwise would be funded by second collections.

I remind you once again that the pledges/cash that our parish receives, exceeding our goal, comes back to us, with a ten percent addition. These funds can help to fund the many, many needs we have at Notre Dame.

People used to look at our Parish Campus and admire its architectural integrity, land, and beauty.

This assessment cannot be made today. We have many *essential* tasks that continue to be delayed because of a lack of funds: e.g. exterior deterioration of church pillars and facades, school pillars and cupola, the rectory porch, the corrosion of plumbing and guest room fixtures in rectory, and much else.

Please give to CSA, as well as to the parish collection during this unusual time.

Continued from page 2, Father Keith

God's kingdom.

It is not especially flattering to God for us to suggest that God stands behind pandemics, plagues, wars, the Holocaust, or any other calamities.

Fatalism is not a Christian virtue, though many Christians have lived by it for millennia. It is also known as *quietism*. Its attraction is understandable because it makes the spiritual life easy and regular life comfortable.

True, we were taught in religious education "to do God's will." However, we were not taught very well that God's will for me, for you, for the world, requires *discernment*. We must participate. Often we confuse our own will for God's will.

The Book of Genesis tries to show us that death and sin came into the world by the agency of human beings. Likewise redemption from sin and death comes through human cooperation with God beginning with the Blessed Virgin Mary's "Yes" to God.

During this pandemic, we must not surrender to fatalism. The reason we have physicians, nurses, caregivers, and researchers searching for vaccines is because "what will be is not necessarily what must be" as Pearl Buck wrote. Following the health and hygiene standards set by professionals is a spiritual act, a sign of our cooperation in seeking God's will.

Father Keith & Rocco

ND NEWS

Franciscan Health has sent us a thank-you letter for your donation of baby blankets and clothes "during this unprecedented pandemic year."

Greeting and blessings to our vulnerable and homebound parishioners. We miss you but we are always praying for you.

School is back and it appears the new procedures and drills are working well. Thanks to administration, teachers, parents and students for their patience and understanding.

The annual Notre Dame raffle netted \$16,500. After rewarding the winners, the parish has \$14,500 at its disposal. Congratulations to the winners and all who participated in it.

sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:10-11). This gift has changed many hearts, both in the men and women whose stories are told in the Gospels and in countless others through the centuries. Through the grace of God, this forgiveness flows from the heart of Jesus to all of us, drawing us into the joy and unity of the Trinity. The Samaritan woman at the well is a fine example of this joyful response as she raced to tell all the villagers about Jesus – the very same villagers she had been avoiding (John 4:1-42).

Many saints have offered descriptions about the nature of God's forgiveness and mercy. St. John Vianney (1786–1859) wrote, "Our sins are nothing but a grain of sand alongside the great mountain of the mercy of God." St. Francis de Sales (1567–1622) proclaimed, "Where is the foolish person who would think it in his power to commit a sin more than God could forgive." The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches,

"There is no one, however wicked and guilty, who may not confidently hope for forgiveness, provided his repentance is honest" (Roman Catechism I, 11, 5).

Christ who died for all men desires that in his Church the gates of forgiveness should always be open to anyone who turns away from sin. (982) This means that each of us is faced with a life-defining and death-defying choice: will I accept this offer of the unconditional, forgiving love of Christ, or will I reject it?

Surrendering to the Gift of Forgiveness

During his first public interview, published in September 2013, Pope Francis rocked the world with his response to the interviewer's first question, "Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio?" Pope Francis paused for a few moments and responded, "I am a sinner. This is the most accurate definition. It is not a figure of speech, a literary genre. *I am a sinner . . . I am a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon*" (emphasis added).

Yes! The Christian is someone "whom the Lord has looked upon" with mercy and forgiveness. "As far as the east is from the west, / so far he removes our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12). But do you really believe this? Do you know how to accept this gift? Do you surrender to God as a sinner? And do you know how to respond by forgiving yourself in God's presence so that you can be free enough to forgive others?

God's Invitations to Forgiveness

The second part of the mystery of forgiveness is that we are called to offer forgiveness to others. To forgive others, we must allow God's Holy Spirit to work through us to love and forgive them. "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15). This is a bold spiritual truth that is meant to be the measure of every relationship. And if you are thinking that forgiveness is impossible on your own, you are right! Forgiveness can only be your distinguishing mark as a Christian if you are willing to fall on your knees and ask for this gift. Forgiveness and mercy are for those who are open to facing a host of decisions and conscious choices to enter into God's mercy, over and over again, through an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. +

(excerpted from Mending Broken Relationships, by John and Therese Boucher, The Word Among Us Press, 2015. Available at wau.org/books)

Children's Coloring page: The parable of the Unforgiving Servant.

