

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 17, 2017

Most of us live with some form of financial debt. We have car payments, mortgage payments, our young people have student loans and so many Americans have credit card debt. The other day on public radio, a commentator was saying that if every man woman and child made a payment of \$60,000, we would be able to retire the national debt. Some many people live from pay check to pay check and there is no room for unexpected needs or if they lose there jobs. They would then lose everything. In Massena, there was a part of the village that was called Mortgage Hill. It was filled with very nice homes but high mortgages, so much so many of them did not have enough money left to eat. Everything looked good on the outside.

Today's readings talk about holding on to grudges, having hatred in one's heart, and they talk also about forgiveness and mercy. They call us to think about those times when I have experienced God's mercy, forgiveness and love. Also we recall, when we are called to forgive someone or when we have to ask forgiveness from someone whom we have injured thought word or deed.

In ancient times, the rabbis had a general rule of thumb that indicated a sinner could be forgiven as many as three times. This would have been considered very generous and merciful. Do doubt , Peter felt that he was raising the bar greatly by suggesting to Jesus that someone should be forgiven seven times. How shocked he was when Jesus said he must forgive 77 times 7 which is a symbolic way to say an unlimited number of times.

We are reminded today that we have sinned against God who is an infinite being and when we sin we are placing ourselves higher than God. In order to pay back our debt before God would be trying to pay the national debt on our own. Jesus as God and man is able to satisfy the debt by his sacrifice on the Cross. Once and for all. We on our own could repay the debt. It is done only by a free gift of grace.

The last lesson before us today is that forgiveness is a two way street. If we have been given forgiveness and mercy from God, than we must grant forgiveness and mercy to others.

Baptism is the first sacrament of forgiveness and mercy and what we do at the Eucharist is celebrate God 's gift of forgiveness. We come to know more and more that we are forgiven so we can go out into the world and be generous in forgiving others