

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME—2020

This weekend our readings once again remind us that forgiveness is one of the hallmarks of being a Christian and that it is one of the ways that we show ourselves as a true and authentic disciple of Jesus Christ. So easy to put into words, but oftentimes hard to put into action. In the first reading today we are told that wrath and anger are hateful things and are held on to by those who are far from God. In that same reading we are asked to hand over our anger to God, entrusting ourselves to God's fairness and justice.

Our God who really cares for us and who really knows us better than we do ourselves, knows that the person who lives with unforgiveness or resentment cannot be a happy person and will not be able to experience happiness or peace.

As we reflect on what happened 19 years ago on that first 9/11 and all the different things that have happened since and happening all around us now, we have plenty of reason to be concerned and upset. One of the things that I have heard many people share with me is the feeling of being somewhat helpless. When it comes to our feelings about those who have been or are responsible for what we are going through, it's important to remember that the only way they we will ever be defeated or lose is if we seek revenge or allow hate to enter our hearts.

And so, how do we respond when we are faced with evil? Jesus tells us we need to respond by trying to forgive as individuals and as communities. We respond by trying to be peace makers and creators of justice. We also respond by our generosity; by our helping those who are hurting. We respond by showing our gratitude to all those who put their lives on the line for us, first responders, medical personnel, members of the military, all those who are taking the risk to keep us safe the many, many people who are part of supportive staffs, working behind the scenes, often unnoticed.

We respond by remembering the most precious gifts that we have: our families and friends; we respond by remembering how fragile life is and in an instant, whether by chance, disaster or violence, we or someone we know might be taken from us. We respond by treasuring our time with our loved ones and try to make sure that there is nothing that would ever cause us any regrets.

We gather together today to realize that we are not alone and that we turn to God to hear his word and to be reminded that in the midst of all this, God is with us with his healing and consoling presence. We are called to strengthen our reliance upon God and each other in order to

maintain our hope and find our strength. Again, it is a call to do our part to be creators of justice and peace which will bring true joy to our waiting world. This is what brings real delight to God and this the only way to make things better. It all begins with a peaceful, forgiving and undivided heart.

Let us once again answer the call to be people of hope; let us be people who really care for each other and for those whom we don't even know but need our help. This is how can help bring about that new world now. We don't have to wait until the end of time. We bring about that new world by embracing real goodness and making it a part of our lives and using it as the basis of all our choices. We bring about that new world by seeing one another and accepting one another as they are, that is, as sisters and brothers whose lives are really intertwined. Together we will get through whatever comes our way.

Today we are blest to be able to celebrate the First Communion of several of our younger brothers and sisters. We are very happy for them and their families. We pray that this will be the first time of many, many other times when together, with them, we will be able to share in this most wonderful gift of the Eucharist which is that powerful reminder of Jesus who is always with us and a celebration of our truly being part of one family, true sisters and brothers to each other united in the love of a God who truly cares for each one of us as a loving Father.