

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN OT-A

How many times must I forgive my neighbor who offends me? As many as seven times?

Peter thinks he is being generous.

Forgiving the same person who wrongs you over and over again is never easy.

What is easy is giving into the temptation to wrath and anger which Sirach describes as hateful in the eyes of God.

Both Sirach and Jesus teach us to reflect on how much God has forgiven us.

"Could anyone refuse mercy to another ... and seek pardon for his own sins?"

Jesus teaches that God will surely punish us for our sins unless we forgive our brothers and sisters from our heart.

And yet we know that our world is filled with wrath, hatred, and vengeful actions. Injustice, crime, and violence fill the streets of cities across our nation.

Society is so very much in need of Christ's message of reconciliation proclaimed by the Church, and we as Catholics are very much in need of the guidance and support that our parishes and local Diocese offers.

This Sunday we kick-off our Catholic Services Appeal.

It actually began right after Easter with the Bishop's Guild appeal but was then put on hold as the COVID crisis deepened.

But, in spite of COVID, the ministry of the Church has to continue and for this we are in need of everyone's support and participation.

The Catholic Services Appeal funds important offices and ministries such as Catholic Charities, support of our seminarians, the diaconate and the lay ministry programs.

CSA also finances diocesan programs for youth ministry, marriage & family, pro-life, and the other-abled.

Furthermore, eight national collections including support for retired priests and religious, as well as for the Pope and the Church in the Holy Land, are funded through CSA.

Our goal for this year is \$43,250.

It's important to remember that all of the money we have pledged beyond our goal will be returned to the parish.

Last year this amounted to over \$28,000 which we used toward the paving of the rest of the parking areas.

Please consider this fundraising opportunity for our parish when you make your pledge.

There are always special projects for which we can use additional income. As you know ...

... out of concern for the safety of all, we had to cancel our rummage sale and parish picnic (with its raffle).

Combined, these events generate approximately \$15,000 income that has been lost this year.

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We have also not been able to rent the hall which usually brings in \$10,000.

I am asking everyone to be as generous as you able so that we can meet our CSA goal of \$43,250 and recoup that \$25,000 in fundraising income.

Both Bishop McClory and I realize that your financial situation may have been affected by the current pandemic.

Some are out of work. Others are struggling.

However, your participation in the Catholic Services Appeal in any amount will make a tremendous difference.

God always promises to reward any **sacrifice** we are willing to make for the good of our parish, our Diocese, and the Church throughout the world.

St. Paul reminds us in today's second reading: "None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself ... we live for the Lord." Indeed Paul declares: "We are the Lord's."

This is the meaning of stewardship.

Everything we have has been entrusted to us by the Lord for the care of our families and the building up of the Kingdom of God.

And just as today's readings speak to us of imitating God's mercy, so we are called to imitate God's generosity.

Please fill out your pledge card as soon as possible and mail it directly to the Diocese or drop it in the collection basket.

Please know how grateful I am for your continued stewardship, and be assured that I will ask God to reward your generosity towards the Catholic Services Appeal and our parish.