



22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
September 3, 2017

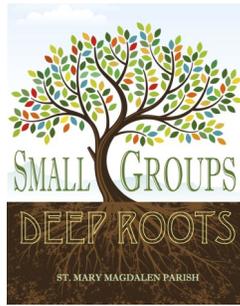
GOSPEL MATTHEW 16:21-27

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised.

Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you."

He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father's glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct."



September 3, 2017

GOSPEL MATTHEW 16:21-27

Adapted from Bartunek, Fr. John The Better Part, p 213

What struck you most in this passage? What did you notice that you had not noticed before?

Why did Peter rebuke Jesus for saying he was going to have to suffer and die? Why was Peter's idea "not as God thinks, but as men think"?

If you were one of the disciples seeing this exchange between Jesus and Peter, what would your reaction be? Would you defend Peter? Why or why not?

What are the crosses in my life? How does the society around me say I should react to the crosses—difficulties, challenges, and suffering—that life and fidelity to my Christian identity bring on?



23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
September 10, 2017

GOSPEL MATTHEW 18:15-20

Jesus said to his disciples:
"If your brother sins against you,
go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.

If he listens to you, you have won over your brother.
If he does not listen,
take one or two others along with you,
so that 'every fact may be established
on the testimony of two or three witnesses.'

If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church.
If he refuses to listen even to the church,
then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector.

Amen, I say to you,
whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven,
and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Again, amen, I say to you,
if two of you agree on earth
about anything for which they are to pray,
it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name,
there am I in the midst of them."



September 10, 2017

GOSPEL MATTHEW 18:15-20

Adapted from Bartunek, Fr. John The Better Part, p 224-25

What struck you most in this passage? What did you notice that you had not noticed before?

“All Christians are in a sense ‘pastors of the souls entrusted to their spiritual or physical care’. With this instruction, Jesus is enjoining each of (but especially his ordained ministers, those who will carry on the ministry of his Twelve Apostles) to give everyone the attention they need, to go after the wandering sheep, and to do everything possible to bring them back into the safety of his fold.

Who do I need to shepherd back into the fold? Who are the family members that I interact with, that needs to be reminded of their Christian identity?

What are some concrete ways we encourage our fellow Christians to greater fidelity without putting ourselves on a pedestal or making them feel rejected?



24th Sunday in Ordinary Time September 17, 2017

GOSPEL MATTHEW 18:21-35

Jesus said Peter approached Jesus and asked him,
"Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive?
As many as seven times?"

Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.
That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided
to settle accounts with his servants.

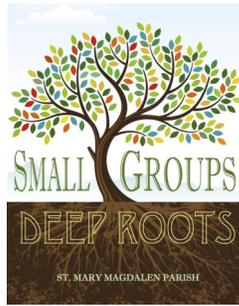
When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed
him a huge amount. Since he had no way of paying it back, his master
ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his
property, in payment of the debt.

At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, 'Be patient with me,
and I will pay you back in full.' Moved with compassion the master of that
servant let him go and forgave him the loan.

When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him
a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding,
'Pay back what you owe.' Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him,
'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But he refused.

Instead, he had the fellow servant put in prison until he paid back the debt.
Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply
disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair. His
master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave
you your entire debt because you begged me to.

Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?'
Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should
pay back the whole debt. So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless
each of you forgives your brother from your heart."



September 17, 2017

GOSPEL MATTHEW 18:21-35

Adapted from Antony, Fr John Oh For Heaven's Sake, p 77

The eighteenth chapter of the gospel of Matthew recounts Jesus' parable of forgiveness. Much has been made of how many times Jesus says you should forgive, not seven times but seventy-seven times. Scripture scholars explain that the number "seventy-seven" is really symbolic and means a limitless number of times. You must always forgive, no matter how many times someone offends you.

But for me that is not really the point of the parable; rather, the crux is in the last line, where Jesus says each of us must forgive our brother from the heart. Sometimes we forgive our neighbor... our lips are moving and saying the right words, but our hearts are a million miles away.... What matters is what comes "di cuore", which is Italian and means, "from the heart."

It is easy to tell when something is heartfelt, and when it is not.

The heart is always where forgiveness has to start; otherwise, forgiveness is phony.

- Think of a time when YOU have had to be forgiven over and over by someone else. Share that experience if you would like.
- Think of someone you have to forgive, maybe your spouse, or a sibling, or an old friend. Reach out to them and apologize or forgive them. Share, if you would like.

It will not matter if you forgive your brother seventy-seven times if that forgiveness does not also come *di cuore*. Let's pray together as a group for each other's ability to forgive di cuore. Please keep all shared comments confidential.