

*True love does not keep score...*

## 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A

SIR 27:30—28:7, PS 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12, ROM 14:7-9, MT 18:21-35



Dcn Frank Sila  
9/17/2017

Good evening. I am Deacon Frank and I would like to extend a special welcome to all of our college students. You bring with you the excitement of a new academic year. Welcome.

I want to begin by sharing with you an image. It is the image of a toxic waste dump. It could be anyone of a number of waste dumps scattered outside our cities. This particular dump was a hot collection of 55-gallon drums. *Hot*, because as the drums rusted through, the chemicals mixed creating a caustic soup that gave off an acrid yellow smoke. The result was deadly. With each rain, the chemicals leached further away from the site and into the nearby stream and groundwater used by the community.

In today's Gospel, Jesus shares the parable of the debtor. We are called to forgive as God forgives us. "...not seven times but seventy-seven times." Forgiveness is essential. So much so, that when the disciples ask Jesus how to pray he shares a prayer to, "Our Father." In this prayer are the words of hope, that, God forgives us as we forgive those that have injured us. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Forgiveness is foundational to the Kingdom that Jesus will create.

When we dwell on the injustices that come our way, and fail to forgive, those wrongs become like the caustic chemicals of a waste dump. In our first reading Sirach tells us, 'Wrath and anger are hateful things but we hug them tight.' When we refuse to let loose of a grudge we are injured by hanging on to it. The acidity eats away at our wellbeing. Our failure to forgive, poisons the soil between us, and the relationship is stunted. When we fail to forgive, we do not suffer *for* our sin as much as we suffer *from the result* of our sin.

Relationships do not do well when each are wishing the other ill will. In the parable of the debtor, Jesus shows his understanding of our human nature. He knows that our humanity likes to count each wrong. The love *He* shares, does not keep score.

If we are to have a hand in building the Kingdom of God, “Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done,” we must learn to forgive. Without forgiveness, we create fences. With forgiveness, we build bridges. God created us to share in the Divine Presence by being in relationship with one another. ‘For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst...’ The grudges and hurts that we hold onto are toxic because they divide.

We are meant to see each other as God sees us; people of dignity created in His image and likeness. Our hurt arises when others choose not to see our inherent dignity. Forgiveness affirms dignity and builds. It is the bridge that spans our injustice to one another.

The Eucharist that we are about to receive, gives us spiritual insight into our dignity as Children of God. With that insight may we treat our brothers and sisters with the same dignity. May we receive the grace in this Communion to forgive one another.

## References

All scripture quotations are taken from;. (1987). *The New American Bible, Revised edition*. USCCB.

I welcome your questions and comments. My email is [fsila@sttomskazoo.org](mailto:fsila@sttomskazoo.org).

**Note:** Our college students are back on campus. They bring with them the excitement of a new academic year. My homily was brief because we conducted student registration during mass. The registration is a gathering of student talents and understanding of how they would like to serve in our community in the upcoming year. They bless us with their presence.