

Dear Padre,

We knew a beloved priest whose death was self-inflicted. What is the Church's stance on suicide?

Offer my heartfelt sympathy to you and the faith community for this tragic loss. "We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2280). Those who take their own life to end personal suffering assume a decision-making that belongs to God alone. However, the Church also acknowledges that "grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide" (CCC 2282).

At the same time, the Church relies on the compassion of God, who fully knows the intensity of suffering that triggers suicide. Therefore, the Church pastorally states: "We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives" (CCC 2283).

How, then, does the Church specifically pray for those who've committed suicide?

Generally they're not deprived of full burial rites in the Church, which consoles the living and commends all of the dead "to God's merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins" (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 6). Nor are they deprived of burial in a Catholic cemetery—a sacred place that helps bring peace to those confronted by the sudden death of a suicide.

—Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR
Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org



Calendar

- Monday**
SEPTEMBER 14
The Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Nm 21:4b–9
Phil 2:6–11
Jn 3:13–17
- Tuesday**
SEPTEMBER 15
Our Lady of Sorrows
1 Cor 12:12–14, 27–31a
Jn 19:25–27 or
Lk 2:33–35
- Wednesday**
SEPTEMBER 16
Sts. Cornelius, Pope, and Cyprian, Bishop, Martyrs
1 Cor 12:31–13:13
Lk 7:31–35
- Thursday**
SEPTEMBER 17
Weekday
1 Cor 15:1–11
Lk 7:36–50
- Friday**
SEPTEMBER 18
Weekday
1 Cor 15:12–20
Lk 8:1–3
- Saturday**
SEPTEMBER 19
Weekday
1 Cor 15:35–37, 42–49
Lk 8:4–15
- Sunday**
SEPTEMBER 20
Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Is 55:6–9
Phil 1:20c–24, 27a
Mt 20:1–16a

Our Parish COMMUNITY

September 13, 2020
Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
Sir 27:30–28:7
Rom 14:7–9
Mt 18:21–35

Limitless Forgiveness

What makes seven such an important number? It's the symbolism. It signifies wholeness, completeness, and totality. So, seventy-seven (or seventy times seven in some Bible translations) suggests infinity. Peter was exaggerating when he suggested that he might forgive his brother seven times. He presumed that if he acted in this way, his behavior would demonstrate the immeasurable extent of his personal graciousness. Jesus' response implied that there should be no end to our forgiving another. To underscore the significance of this magnanimity, Jesus offered God (in the guise of the king who forgave a huge debt) as the exemplar of forgiving.

Forgiving another's offense against us could well be one of the most difficult things we are asked to do. To ask for forgiveness does not seem as difficult. After all, when we bump into a perfect stranger in an elevator, we say, "Forgive me." But to forgive someone who has

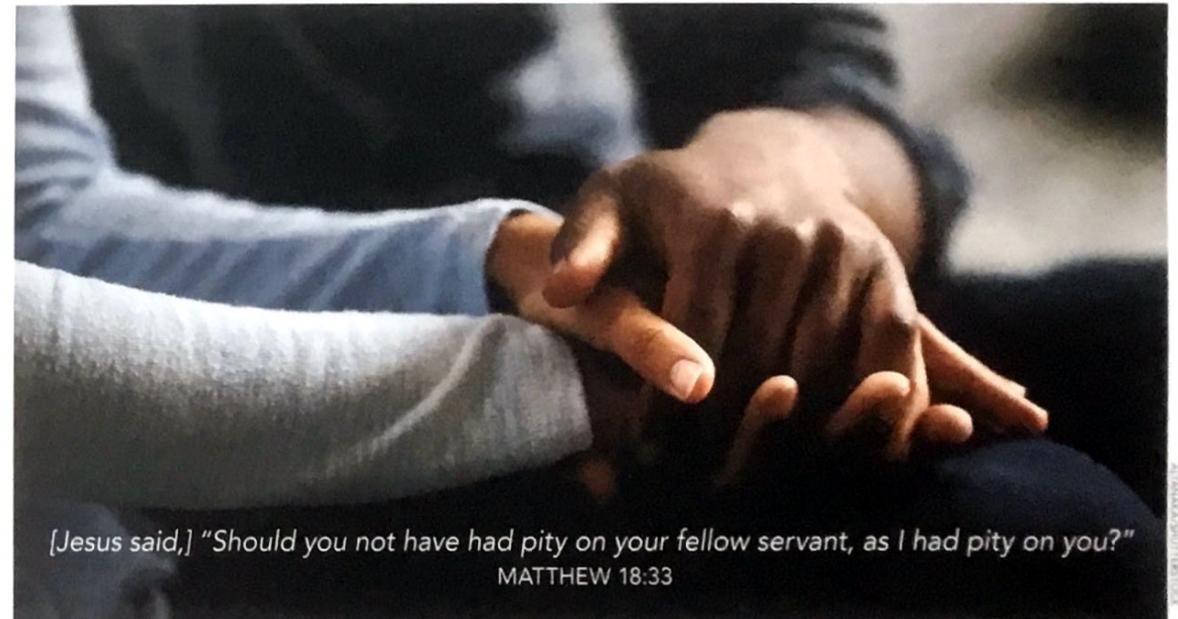
deliberately offended us, who has dishonored our sense of personal dignity, as slight as that offense might be, is neither as easy nor as casual a gesture. And yet, we must.

We all carry debts to others. Both the first reading and the Gospel passage remind us that the debts owed to us by others in no way compare with the debt we owe God, and yet God shows us compassion and forgives us. If we are grateful children of a compassionate God, we will want to be like God and we will forgive others.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- * Say the Lord's Prayer slowly, reflecting on "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."
- * Do you carry resentment in your heart? Does clinging to it lessen its burden in any way?



[Jesus said,] "Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?"

MATTHEW 18:33

A WORD FROM Pope Francis

The increase in the rates of suicide in your cities, as well as bullying and various kinds of neediness, are creating new forms of alienation...I ask you to pay special attention to [the young] and their needs. Try to create spaces...of generous and selfless love...to everyone, and not only to those who have "made it."

—MEETING WITH BISHOPS, TOKYO, NOVEMBER 23, 2019





Rectory & Parish Office
 600 Soderberg St. Lakin, KS 67860
 Mailing Address: PO Box 983
 Fr. Peter Tran, Pastor—355-6405
 Tuesday—Friday 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
 Email: saintanthonylakin@gmail.com
 Website: saintanthonylakin.org

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| Louise Miller, Bookkeeper | jingles@pld.com |
| Molly Shelden DRE | 451-0548 |
| RCIA | 355-6405 |
| Gwen Waechter, Parish Council Chair | 272-1030 |
| Tressa Powers, Finance Council Chair | 355-6206 |
| Altar Society President, Nanette Rice | 355-7676 |
| Tom Bachman, Grand Knight | 640-8259 |
| Prayer Line Starters, Allison Bushek & Nanette Rice | 355-1696 355-7676 |

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

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|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Monday, Sept. 14 | 8:00 a.m. | Favorable Weather |
| Tuesday, Sept. 15 | 8:00 a.m. | Pastor's Intention |
| Thursday, Sept. 17 | 8:00 a.m. | Special Intention |
| Friday, Sept. 18 | 8:00 a.m. | Marcos S. Cardenas |
| Saturday, Sept. 19 | 4:00 p.m. | For the People |
| Sunday, Sept. 20 | 9:00 a.m. | Pastor's Intention |

**Readers for Saturdays & Sundays
 September 2020**

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|-------------------------|----------------|
| September 12, 4:00 p.m. | Tom Bachman |
| September 13, 9:00 a.m. | Steve Sullivan |
| September 19, 4:00 p.m. | Gwen Waechter |
| September 20, 9:00 a.m. | K of C Members |
| September 26, 4:00 p.m. | Karen Burden |
| September 27, 9:00 a.m. | Alvin Berkamp |

Thank you so much for your ministry!



VOCATION VIEW

The Lord is kind and merciful; slow to anger, and rich in compassion. Are you following in Jesus' footsteps? Pray for the grace to forgive. (Psalm 103). If you think God is calling you to priesthood or to consecrated life, visit our website at www.dcdiocese.org/vocations

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

Stewardship is not optional! "None of us lives as his own master and none of us dies as his own master," says St. Paul. "While we live we are responsible to the Lord, and when we die we die as his servants."

SACRAMENTS

Reconciliation: Confessions will be heard every Saturday at 3:00 p.m. and every Sunday at 8:00 a.m. or by appointment. Please be humbled to reconcile with God, the Church, and the community.

Baptism: Parents who have children to be baptized must be registered. Godparents must be 16 years of age or older and have received Confirmation and Eucharist. Please call the parish office for an appointment.

Marriage: Please contact parish priest at least six months before the wedding.

Anointing of the Sick: Celebrated anytime by calling a priest.

A FEW WORDS FROM THE PASTOR

My Dear Parishioners: Greetings in the Lord on this twenty-fourth Sunday of the ordinary time. "Could anyone nourish anger against another and expect healing from the Lord?" is the question that the Lord asks each of us in today's first reading. How will we respond to Him? Nearly all parents want their kids to have it better than they had it. They want them to do better financially. They want them to live in a better home and drive a better car. They want them to have a great marriage and loyal friends and good health and all sorts of other things they might not have had themselves. But what about the other people in our lives? Are we truly happy when they have it better than we do? It's really difficult wanting better things for others than we ourselves have. Jealousy can be a stubborn thing. What about when it comes to God? This might be the most difficult one of all --- wanting the same things from God that we want others to receive from God. Think about it. We mess up and what do we want? Forgiveness. Others mess up and we hold a grudge --- hoping they ultimately "get what they deserve." We want understanding and compassion when we are dealing with a crisis or an addiction or some personal failing. When others do the same, we offer judgment and disapproval and contempt instead. And when we are having a bad day, we want others to be kind anyway. But when we encounter someone else having a bad day --- we want to really "give it to them." Two standards. The way I want God to treat ME. And the way we want God to treat OTHERS. Almost never the same thing. But they certainly should be. We can only receive what we are willing to give. If we want to experience love, we have to love someone. If we want to experience mercy, we need to show mercy. If we want to be forgiven, we need to be willing to forgive. If we want God's blessings, we need to be a true blessing to others --- caring for them, helping them when they are in need, loving them regardless if they return our love, being present to them as our God is present to us. These things are all interconnected, they don't exist in some sort of isolation. Do we truly want that? Sincerely? Are we willing to do that? Can we move past our own selfishness and "me-first" attitudes --- and honestly want for others the same things we want for ourselves? Impossible? God doesn't think so. Let's not think so either. Peace and good health to you all. Fr. Peter

COLLECTION for September 6, 2020: Envelopes: \$780.00; Loose: \$91.00; Online Giving: \$1,219.07; Total \$2,090.07; Average Weekly Expense: \$1,989.55. Income over/under (+100.52) *Thank you so much to our faithful stewards for supporting our parish, diocese, and worldwide Church.*

RESPECT LIFE/SOCIAL JUSTICE: "In our present social context, marked by a dramatic struggle between the "culture of life" and the "culture of death", there is need to develop a deep critical sense, capable of discerning true values and authentic needs. What is urgently called for is a general mobilization of consciences and a united ethical effort to activate a great campaign in support of life. All together, we must build a new culture of life."- Blessed John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life*, no. 95

RCIA (RITE OF CHRISTIAN OF ADULTS) PROCESS IN THE PARISH

- Have you been worshipping with us, but never officially taken the step to become Catholic?
 - Have you been away from the Church, and have now returned, but want to know more?
 - Have you been a Catholic all your life, but never celebrated all the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist)?
 - Have you joined us from a different background and would like to find out more about the Catholic Church?
- If you ("or someone you know") answers YES to any of these questions, you are invited to find out more through process called the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). It is a journey that begins with your questions. There is no obligation to join us as you discover more about your Catholic faith. The decision is ultimately yours to discern if this is to be your spiritual home. The invitation is always open. Please call us (620-355-6405) when you are ready! On behalf of the Catholic faith community of the St. Anthony, we look forward to welcoming you.

UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL OF THE WEEK (MATTHEW 18: 15-20)

Setting limits Peter wants rules about how much to forgive. Jesus replies that forgiveness is the rule. Given the teaching right before this one, however, it seems that Jesus is telling us to forgive someone who repents. He also wants us to pray in order to know how to respond to a persistent sinner (vv.19-20).

Lamech In Genesis 4:23-24 a man (Lamech) declares that if anyone hurts him he will take revenge "seventyfold," which means that his revenge is limitless. Jesus stands against such endless vengeance. His followers must be like God, whose mercy is without limit. If we want to be part of God's kingdom, we must imitate God who reigns over it.

Community adhesive This passage is the last one in a section on how to be church (18:1-35). By placing it at the end, Matthew emphasizes the necessity of forgiveness. People sin and make mistakes. If we hold grudges against each other, our faith community won't survive.

Change of heart The parable doesn't quite fit Peter's question. It doesn't describe forgiving someone many times but forgiving them on a large scale. The debt of the first servant is so great that he couldn't have ever repaid it. The second servant owes an amount that could be repaid. The situation of the first servant changed but not the servant himself. His heart was unmoved by his experience of having his debt forgiven. Because he didn't share the forgiveness he received, he lost it. The parable warns us that God's gift of forgiveness must be shared if we are to keep it <https://oursundayreadings>

FEAST DAY OF THE WEEK—The Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14)

Early in the fourth century, Saint Helena, mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine, went to Jerusalem in search of the holy places of Christ's life. She razed the second-century Temple of Aphrodite, which tradition held was built over the Savior's tomb, and her son built the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher on that spot. During the excavation, workers found three crosses. Legend has it that the one on which Jesus died was identified when its touch healed a dying woman. The cross immediately became an object of veneration. At a Good Friday celebration in Jerusalem toward the end of the fourth century, according to an eyewitness, the wood was taken out of its silver container and placed on a table together with the inscription Pilate ordered placed above Jesus' head: Then "all the people pass through one by one; all of them bow down, touching the cross and the inscription, first with their foreheads, then with their eyes; and, after kissing the cross, they move on."

To this day, the Eastern Churches, Catholic and Orthodox alike, celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on the September anniversary of the basilica's dedication. The feast entered the Western calendar in the seventh century after Emperor Heraclius recovered the cross from the Persians, who had carried it off in 614, 15 years earlier. According to the story, the emperor intended to carry the cross back into Jerusalem himself, but was unable to move forward until he took off his imperial garb and became a barefoot pilgrim.

The cross is today the universal image of Christian belief. Countless generations of artists have turned it into a thing of beauty to be carried in procession or worn as jewelry. To the eyes of the first Christians, it had no beauty. It stood outside too many city walls, decorated only with decaying corpses, as a threat to anyone who defied Rome's authority—including Christians who refused sacrifice to Roman gods. Although believers spoke of the cross as the instrument of salvation, it seldom appeared in Christian art unless disguised as an anchor or the Chi-Rho until after Constantine's edict of toleration. <https://www.franciscanmedia.org>

PRAYER OF THE WEEK (St. Catherine of Siena)

Merciful Lord, it does not surprise me that you forget completely the sins of those who repent. I am not surprised that you remain faithful to those who hate and revile you. The mercy which pours forth from you fills the whole world. It was by your mercy that we were created, and by your mercy that you redeemed us by sending your Son. Your mercy is the light in which sinners find you and good people come back to you. Your mercy is everywhere... Your justice is constantly tempered with mercy, so you refuse to punish us as we deserve. O mad Lover! It was not enough for you to take on our humanity; you had to die for us as well.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

I keep hearing we're all supposed to be saints. Is that realistic?

Yes—if we have a good appreciation of what a saint is. A saint is a sinner who just keeps trying, as the saying goes. The essential interior difference between the average person and the saint is perseverance in the quest for fullness of life. But even that sounds like jargon. Fullness of life? It's a Scripture term meaning everything human life is supposed to be but often isn't. Genesis says we're made in the divine image, so whatever divine life is, that's what we have the inbred capacity and yearning for. We're designed to be creative, wise, loving, compassionate, just, limitless, eternal. But too often, we turn out dulled and thwarted, pinning our hopes on foolish goals and pursuits, jaded and cynical, lonely, judgmental, and biased. Far from being expansive creatures, we hurl away our freedoms in favor of programmed entertainments and prepackaged consumer ambitions. Instead of fullness of life, most of us settle for just a sip.

The way to get it all, curiously, involves giving a lot of what we currently value away. The secular gurus of simplification are right: our modern lives are choking us with stuff, and we need to divest, downsize, and aim to own less, want less, do less. Thérèse of Lisieux counseled that Our Lord cherishes simplicity. We have to un-complicate our calendars and find silence in the cacophony demanding our attention. Once we create some blissful empty space, we can load up on virtues, which Anthony of the Desert considered a better source of nourishment than what's usually on the table.

Being holy doesn't involve cosmic revelations. Vincent de Paul offered a simple way: will what God wills, see as God sees. If that's still too lofty a starting place, consider Dominic's advice to master your passions or be mastered by them. Newly canonized Pope John XXIII believed ten minutes of spiritual reading a day would feed the soul. Camillus de Lellis had his own pithy formula: Think well. Speak well. Do well.

If this short listing convinces us of anything, it's that many paths lead to holy living. What's vital is to begin—somewhere. You can't go wrong by embracing the spirit of humility, which is every saint's favorite virtue. Paint the house of your soul with it, John Chrysostom recommended. Or how about capitalizing on love? Clare of Assisi observed that we become what we love. If we love things, we become a thing. If we love Christ, we become sons and daughters of God. (Alice L. Camille)

Scripture: Psalm 16:11; Matthew 5:3-12; John 10:10; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Ephesians 2:19-22; 3:14-19; Galatians 4:3-7; Colossians 2:6-10; 1 Timothy 1:16

Books: *The Saints' Little Book of Wisdom: The Essential Teachings*, by Andrea Kirk Assaf, Kelly Anne Leahy, compilers (HarperCollins, 2016)

My Badass Book of Saints: Courageous Women Who Showed Me How to Live, by Maria Morera Johnson (Ave Maria Press, 2015)

SUNDAY MEDITATION

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

SHARE THE WEALTH

Jesus tells the parable of the servant forgiven his large debt who then refuses to forgive a small debt owed him. How could we not forgive others, when God has forgiven us so much? Someone always raises the objection that you can't let someone who kicked you once have another go at it. But that is not what Jesus is asking us to do. He's not asking us to be fools. He's reminding us we're all deep in the red with a debt we can't possibly repay. Be grateful we don't have to. (Prepare the Word)

VIGÉSIMO CUARTO DOMINGO DEL TIEMPO ORDINARIO

COMPARTE LA REQUEZA

Jesús cuenta la parábola del sirviente a quien se le perdona su gran deuda y luego se niega a perdonar una pequeña deuda que se le debe. ¿Cómo podemos no perdonar a los demás, cuando Dios nos ha perdonado tanto? Alguien siempre plantea la objeción de que no puedes dejar que alguien que te pateó una vez tenga otra oportunidad. Pero eso no es lo que Jesús nos pide que hagamos. No nos pide que seamos tontos. Nos recuerda que estamos en números rojos con una deuda que no tenemos la posibilidad de pagar. Agradece que no tengamos que hacerlo.

Lecturas del día: Sabiduría 27:30—28:7; Romanos 14:7-9; Mateo 18:21-35 “¿No deberías haber tenido piedad de tu compañero de trabajo, como yo tuve piedad de ti?”