



## 24<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A – September 17, 2017

This past Monday we remembered the events of 9/11 and pray for all the people whose lives were changed by those horrific events. All the scripture readings today speak to us about the importance of forgiveness. In fact, if we do not forgive, we will not be forgiven.

That having been said, how can you forgive people who take the lives of innocent men, women and children in order to further their own misguided ends as some did on 9/11?

It was three years ago that Deacon George Kelly called my attention to a prayer that was found on a piece of paper next to the body of a dead child at the Ravensbruck concentration camp in Germany.

As you read the words of this prayer of forgiveness, ask yourself if they have a place in your heart...

*“Lord God, remember not only the men and women of good-will but also those of ill-will. But do not remember all the suffering they have inflicted on us, remember the fruits we have bought, thanks to this suffering - our comradeship, our loyalty, our humility, our courage, our generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of all this, and when they come before you for judgment, let all the fruits that we have borne be their forgiveness.”*

Whoever wrote those words, understands the message in the scripture readings today. They understand what Jesus means by forgiveness.

In the first reading we find these words. "Forgive your neighbors the wrong they have done, and then *your* sins will be pardoned when you pray".

Often I hear people say, “I don't *feel* like I have forgiven the person who hurt me...the hurt is just too great...”

I remind them that forgiveness is not a *feeling*, it is an act of the will...it doesn't make the *feelings* go away, but it helps us to live with them - until they go away. There is no healing without forgiveness.



Without forgiveness, the anger inside continues to grow like a deadly poison. The offender lives inside your head. It can even result in a desire for revenge. Recall the words attributed to Confucius. “If you seek revenge, begin by digging two graves.” Check out Ephesians 4:31-32.

For a few moments in silence, grab a cup of coffee and pray an Our Father slowly. Concentrate on the words you use, especially the part about forgiveness...

