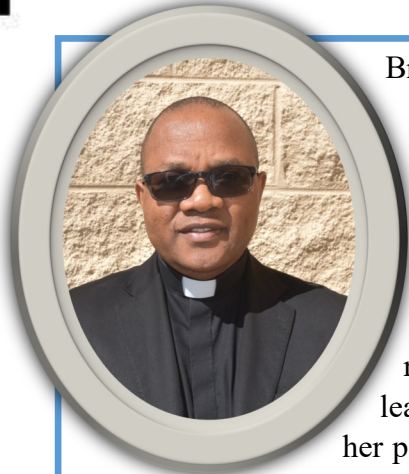


FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters; Grace and Peace!

This past Monday the eleventh of September marked the day when the largest act of terrorism occurred on our land. The heart and soul of America came to a standstill and many of us who lived through it, have it indelibly engraved upon our own hearts. In our Church family, last Sunday evening, I was summoned to UT hospital to administer the Last Rites to one of our own, the young Lucero Barron, returning to Our Lord, at the untimely age of thirty-seven. Lucero leaves behind a four-year-old child and her husband, Marino. Prior to her passing, Marino had so many questions for me concerning Lucero: all I could manage at a time like this is to convey those beliefs and truths handed down in our rich faith...that God loves us and that we all pray that Lucero is on her way to the loving Father. She passed shortly after I returned to the rectory. Please keep Lucero and her family in your prayers.

Our readings this weekend come to life since they concern forgiving our offenders and becoming reconciled with them. Sirach, in the First Reading, reminds his listeners that holding onto wrath and anger can create an impenetrable shield between God and man. There is an old saying that ‘harboring or bitterness is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.’ Our Second Reading from St. Paul also elicits the crux of forgiveness. Since we belong to Christ whose own model of forgiveness towards his executioners set the bar high, we are emboldened to imitate His works.

Our Gospel narrative this weekend, Jesus’ parable of the two debtors, tells us that no offense is too great to be forgiven. We humans represent the more extreme debtor in the parable since we commit sins every day, hence, our need for God’s forgiveness every day. How central is the fifth petition from the Lord’s Prayer; “and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us”? This weekend let us prayerfully consider any offenses or resentment we have towards others, and to ourselves, that may be affecting our eternal salvation. Let us therefore ask our Lord to grant us the gift to overlook faults and breaches of behavior, considering the shortness of our life span, that we may not close the door on our Lord when we harbor anger and resentment.

Recall how Our Lord faced insults and abuses on Calvary and yet forgave all his offenders prior to His passing? If it should happen that we cannot *forget* some of the injuries or anger we have experienced, we still have the free will, by the Grace of God, to forgive and pray for our offenders. This clemency dramatically changes us from being held prisoner of our past to being at peace with our memories. The young **St. Maria Goretti, virgin, martyr, and patron saint of forgiveness**, was only eleven when she was slain by her eighteen- year-old neighbor. Her last words..... “I forgive him and want him to be in paradise with me some day.”

Joyous Sunday!