

## Twenty-Sixth Sunday in the Ordinary Time

Jesus seems to be offering two lessons in today's account from Matthew's Gospel. The first reveals God's willingness to forgive the sinner who repents. Once a person turns away from sin and returns to the Lord, forgiveness comes immediately. The second lesson is for those who are self-righteous and critical of others. The Pharisees criticized Jesus for associating with tax collectors and prostitutes. To their surprise Jesus informs them that tax collectors and prostitutes will be saved before them.

Judgment is for God alone. His posture is always one of mercy. He is ready to embrace with His forgiveness the worst sinner who comes back to Him. Like the story of the Prodigal Son, The Father runs to meet the son who realizes his sin and returns home.

As followers of Jesus, we have much cause for hope. When we sin, we need not despair but rather humble ourselves and come to the Lord. The system He established for us to relieve ourselves of the burden of guilt is the Sacrament of Penance. By making a good confession, we return to the Lord's fold to find peace and joy. This lesson of unconditional forgiveness is meant to teach us how to deal with one another. Forgiving like God forgives brings joy not only to the other, but to us as well.

Peace,

*Fr. Robert*

