



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY September 4 & BEYOND

The second lesson for this Sunday is Paul's letter to Philemon, where we have an example of the radical difference faith in Jesus makes in our lives and in the world. The subject of the letter is a man named Onesimus, a slave who had run away from his master Philemon, a friend and convert of Paul's. He had made his way to Rome, where, under Paul's care, he too had become a Christian. Paul is now sending Onesimus back with this note, asking Philemon to forgive him and accept him back not as a slave, but as a brother in Christ. While the world would have seen this as unthinkable, Paul has every expectation that his request will be granted because he's asking Philemon to see this through the eyes of Jesus.

Paul alludes to this when he prays that Philemon's sharing of the faith may become effective when he perceives *all the good* that we may do for Christ. The world tends to approach relationships from the perspective of justice, that is, the parties fulfilling their duties and obligations and having their rights and interests protected, and that's good. However, it's not *all* the good that we can do for Jesus, which Paul demonstrates when, instead of commanding Philemon to do his Christian duty, he makes his appeal on the basis of love. In this literal circumstance we see the spiritual reality that when we show mercy, allowing our love to go beyond justice, relationships are transformed. Debts are paid, slavery becomes freedom, and bondage becomes brotherhood.

Also, it's critical to see that Paul doesn't impose this on Philemon, but invites him to choose the greatest good, *and* offers to pay the debt himself, if that helps. This is what Jesus has done for us, paying our eternal debt so that we can be generous rather than stingy with our brothers and sisters. So looking at our lives with the eyes of Jesus, are there any places where we're holding onto the idea of justice when what's really needed is mercy? We need to look for opportunities to make the same invitation, offering more than what's owed or expected, whether that means forgiveness and mercy or just a greater



Philemon and Onesimus

love. That's what it means to do *all* the good we can for Christ and it's what will make our faith most effective when we share it.

Father McQueen

Readings for this Sunday

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Psalm 1 Philemon 1-20 Luke 14:25-33

Calendar

SUNDAY: 8:00a Low Mass (Church)
 9:30a Christian Formation (Fireside Room)
 10:30a Solemn Mass (Church)
 —*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Child care is provided at the 8:00a, 10:30a Mass, Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY Labor Day: *Parish Office closed*
 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY: 9:00a Morning Prayer (St. Mary's Chapel)
 9:30a MASS (St. Mary's Chapel)
AA Meetings 6:30p Rainbow Bridge (Fireside Room)
 8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)
 8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)