

## 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – September 16/17, 2017 – Reflection

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Quote: "Wrath and anger are hateful things, yet the sinner hugs them tight ... Could anyone refuse mercy to another like himself ... (and expect healing from the Lord)?"

(Sirach)

School's back and I've been watchin' lotsa little kids wearin' their school uniforms trudin' down the sidewalks, on and off of buses, to classrooms all over town. But the kids in our public schools don't wear uniforms - that's private school stuff. Oh, but they do!! Almost every kid I see has one thing that they all wear, no matter what school they attend ... THE BACKPACK! And the little ones stuff those backpacks so full of books and notebooks, pencil case, lunch boxes, homework and pieces of art for the refrigerator at home - they're so weighed down, they look like the slaves in ancient Egypt who built the pyramids and I marvel how their knees don't buckle under the weight or they don't topple over backwards as the backpack pulls them down!!

Sometimes, lots of us adults, who should've learned a thing or two over the years, who should know better, act just like little kids. We carry around invisible, but very real, backpacks and we fill them with all sorta stuff:

PENS to keep tabs in indelible ink on all the stuff other folk do wrong;

NOTEBOOKS to write in all the times other people have insulted or opposed us;

Heavy BOOKS just filled with the stories we love to read and tell over and over of how somebody hurt me, somebody failed me.

And this whole mess of bitterness, anger, finger-pointing, grudge holding, vengeance seeking weighs on us like a rock pile in a prison, like a ton o' bricks.

We think we're right ... but we're just dumb.

We think we'll get even ... but we just fall behind.

We think God'll get 'em ... but we just get so hard-hearted that we don't get God ... and, like temper-throwing, petulant little children, our lack of forgiveness only lands us in a prison of misery, self-pity, and hardness nobody else wants to be around.

Just where was the school we learned it was such a good idea to be like that??

And when all is said and done, God, who has forgiven us countless times, will say to us:

"Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant,  
as I had pity on you?"

Put down your anger.

Forget your rage.

Drop the millstone ... or ... it will drown you.