

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The liturgy this weekend casts us into the heart of our Lord's innermost teachings. We encounter a blueprint into the power of Christian love, instructing us to favor God's mission, rather than that of our own making. Here we learn how a Christian should behave when our personal ego is hurt; a way quite the opposite from what is present in our human hearts! We learn about making the choices that enhance or break our union with God.

Our first reading opens on David and Saul, how David makes the right choice, respecting God's anointed king by unconditionally forgiving King Saul's egregious offenses. David bypasses the revenge in Saul's heart and supplants it with a great act of mer-

cy. In the second reading, St. Paul tells us how the "first Adam" makes a poor choice in disobedience, bringing death into the world, whereas Jesus, the "second Adam" (according to the early Church Fathers) makes the correct choice of fulfilling his Father's saving plan, thus bringing eternal life, quite a different order from Adam.

These readings help inform us about Luke's Gospel today, with Jesus' revolutionary moral teaching about correct choices in our human relationships, placing special emphasis on the golden rule, "Do to others as you would have them do to you." This golden rule is amplified by a string of particular commands: "Love your enemies...Do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you and pray for those who maltreat you," challenging us to do for others what God has done for us... "Be compassionate, as your Father is compassionate."

We have so many examples in our communion of saints of the way that their choices were directed towards seeking another's good. St. Josephine Bakhita suffered horrific beatings in her early years of Sudanese slavery but was graced with the gift of praying for those who maltreated her. With Jesus' fundamental attitude to seek another's good, He does not demand that we become friends of those who do us harm, but to extend love and mercy to them and be willing to purge our hearts from all forms of hatred.

At length, by daily praying the "Our Father" in asking God to forgive us as we forgive others, we receive healing balm over our wounds. In this prayer, we are called to overcome our natural inclinations towards family members, co-workers, and neighbors who may offend us. This we cannot do on our own without the strength that comes from God and the gospel. Indeed, God's love helps us to conquer our hurts, egos, fears, prejudices and grief.

"If I were to meet the slave-traders who kidnapped me and even those who tortured me, I would kneel and kiss their hands, for if that did not happen, I would not be a Christian and religious today." St. Josephine Bakhita.

Blessed Sunday!