

Some years ago, after a vigorous brotherly and sisterly disagreement, our three children retired only to be aroused at two o'clock in the morning by a terrific thunderstorm. Hearing an unusual noise upstairs I called to find out what was going on. A little voice answered, "We are all in the closet forgiving each other."

This little anecdote may bring a smile to our faces, it may even bring back memories, but it can also plunge us into deeper, more serious thought. Like, where are we...? what are we doing...? and did it take a terrific thunderstorm to get us there? When the thunder rolls, do we scurry into the closet to make our amends before the lightning strikes and if we do, why is that? Why can't we walk into the open room, in the sunlight, and say what needs to be said?

We cling to our anger, resentment and hurt. For what? Do we think that in doing so the person or situation which has caused those feelings is suffering? No, we suffer. What are we afraid of when we refuse to let go of past hurts? Returning to themes and sayings I so often reference we consider today's Gospel parable in light of Dr. Scott Hahn's statement about what God, in Christ, has done for us: "Jesus paid a debt he did not owe, for those who owed a debt they could not pay." A debt for a grievance so great, defying God, that the gates of heaven were closed to us! Yet, we find it so incredibly difficult to forgive even the slightest, most petty offenses.

Jesus ends the parable with a warning that should send shivers down our spines, yet seems to be lost on us: *So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives your brother from your heart.* To hear this parable once every three years in the cycle of readings might snap us back to reality, lest we forget, however, we have the constant, continual and most frequent reminder of the Lord's call in words we say at every Mass, and for some, every day: *Forgive us **our** trespasses **as** we forgive those who trespass against us.* Do we? When will we?

Life is far too short and unpredictable for us to hug tight the wrong things. Jesus paid the debt, forgave us by his cross even though we did not ask and even now forgives us whenever we ask. *Should you not have [had] pity on your fellow servant, as I [have] pity on you? So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives... from your heart.*