God settles your account in Jesus

I was having lunch several weeks ago in a pub/restaurant. A young man, dressed quite trendily, in his forties – that's young! – approached and asked me "Excuse me, are you an authentic man of God?" I thought, "Oh no, why is he asking me this? What have I done wrong? Does he want to say something negative about God, faith, priests, or the church?" Knowing that I am a sinner, that priests have done wrong, and the church has caused harm, I was prepared to accept the slurs graciously. I responded, "I am a *Catholic priest*?" – I thought that was more factual than replying I'm an "authentic man of God!" He then turned, walked away, and went to the bar. I breathed a little sigh of relief he didn't get angry with me. To my surprise, he came back a few minutes later and said that he had paid for my ice cream. I thought, maybe I should have gone for a more expensive dessert!

Even though I am a wounded sinner, and some priests and the Catholic Church do not always have the best reputation, he had settled my account with the pub-restaurant on my behalf. This left me freer to be generous and more grateful than when I sat down to eat knowing I was paying for lunch.

You and I and we have so many things to settle. We have bills to pay, people to say sorry to, things to make up for in our relationships, jobs to do at work, homework at school, repair friendships, suitably caring for dependants: e.g. children, family, parents.

Settling bills takes money, it takes humility to say sorry, love to repair relationships, effort to get stuff done at work/home, mental energy to do schoolwork, patience to suitably care for dependants.

Sometimes you and I have the resources we need to settle these challenges.

Sometimes we don't.

These can make you and me and us feel overwhelmed, anxious, depressed, fearful.

That's normal.

In Jesus, God wants to the power to settle all of these issues with peace.

Ultimately, you can't settle your relationship with God as a wounded sinner by yourself.

No matter how much you work, how hard you try, you can never know that you have settled your account with God. You cannot earn your place in heaven.

This too can lead you, me, and us feeling uncertain, fearful, anxious, depressed.

It makes dealing with all the other aspects of life even more challenging.

In Jesus, God settles your account for you.

In Jesus, God gives you power to settle all the difficult aspects in your daily life.

In the Gospel, Jesus says: "the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants."

Heaven is God settling his account with you.

Is there a debt you feel you need to pay God?

Jesus has paid it.

The sacrament of reconciliation is a beautiful place you can offer any debt to God, and receive the Good News that God has settled that debt and account in Jesus.

Otherwise, we walk around thinking we have a debt to pay that has already been paid!

Because Jesus has settled your debt and account with God for you, you have the power to settle any debt you feel someone may have to you.

For example, is there someone here who feels like your spouse or partner has done something wrong, or hurt you?

Settle their account – forgive them.

Is there a family member who has said or done something wrong to you?

Settle their account – forgive them.

Is there a friend at school or work who has done wrong?

Settle their account – forgive them.

Friends, everyone's debt and account with God has been forgiven in Jesus.

But they may not know it.

Go back into your work, homes, school, and settle people's account/debt to you.

Your forgiveness is God's love and mercy breaking into earth.

It is God's kingdom coming, on earth as it is in heaven.

Catholic teaching is that we make our decision for God *before* we die, not after.

Your and my decision to believe and forgive is urgent.

I invite you to join in me in giving thanks that **God settles your account in Jesus.**

And to commit to settling other's debt to you.