

Forgiveness

Objective:

Jesus said: 'You have to forgive if you want to be forgiven.' So that's it? This very day you may be faced with this question, your child disobeyed a rule, your coworker falsely accused you, your employee was found to have stolen from the company. What do we need to know about scripture and the Church teaching on forgiveness? In this topic we will be reminded of perspectives on forgiveness we may not consider.

Suggested Song: Amazing Grace (Blue 36, Red 586)

Bible and Catechism Readings:

Matt 6:12

In the Our Father we say: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"

Matt 6:14-15

Immediately after teaching the Our Father Jesus then said "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"

Luke 17:3-4

Jesus tells us, "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him; and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

Catechism 1448

..... It comprises two equally essential elements: on the one hand, acts of the man who undergoes conversion through the action of the Holy Spirit: namely, contrition, confession, and satisfaction; on the other, God's action through the intervention of the Church.....who through the bishop and priests forgives sin in the name of Jesus Christ, determines the satisfaction and also prays for the sinner.

The Church acknowledges this principle. In his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, John Paul II notes that the "requirement of forgiveness does not cancel out the objective requirements of justice.....In no passage of the gospel message does forgiveness, or mercy as its source, mean indulgence toward evil, toward scandals, toward injury or insult. In any case, reparation for evil and scandal, compensation for injury, and satisfaction for insult are conditions for forgiveness"

Saint: St (Padre) Pio

St Pio was well known as an amazing confessor. It is said he knew people's sins and would call them out if they did not confess all that was revealed to him.

Vignette:

Jimmy Aiken- Catholic Answers "The Limits of Forgiveness"

"The prior two years witnessed particularly heinous crimes. The year 2001 saw the terrorist attacks, and 2002 saw the priestly sexual abuse scandal. In the wake of both of them, people were pondering the subject of forgiveness.

I remember, in the days immediately following 9/11, people calling *Catholic Answers Live* confused because their priests had told them that the U.S. must not strike back against the terrorists because of the Christian duty of forgiveness.

After the sex scandal broke, there were many—even those who had not themselves been abused—vociferously declaring that they "could never forgive" the priestly abusers for what they had done.

There's something wrong with both of these views of forgiveness. The latter reflects the all-too-human tendency to not forgive no matter what the circumstances. It's the attitude toward which Christ's teachings regarding forgiveness are directed. The former attitude reflects the opposite extreme, insisting on all forms of forgiveness

regardless of the circumstances. Though this attitude of hyper-forgiveness seeks to cloak itself in the teachings of Christ, in reality it goes far beyond what Christ asks us to do and even what God himself does.”

Forgiveness thus does not mean treating someone as if they had never sinned. That would require us to let go of our reason as well as our anger.

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

Before this, did you feel you should be forgiving under all circumstances, maybe even feel guilty when you did not forgive?

But what if I want to forgive someone even if they don't want it or feel they have nothing to be forgiven? What may be some unintended outcomes from unconditional forgiveness?

How should I deal with someone who won't forgive me even though I have told them I am deeply sorry?

How has going to confession helped in your need to forgive someone who has said they were sorry?

When does holding on to anger and refusing to forgive become sinful?

Action Plan:

How am I going to deal with forgiveness issues in my life now?

Consider praying for someone who has not repented a transgression whether against you or another. Discuss the concepts of contrition, confession and satisfaction(penance) with your children?

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