

6.11.2016

---

## TO FORGIVE OFFENSES WILLINGLY

### The Power of Forgiveness

This is the Year of Mercy. We continue to explore the Works of Mercy. Today's discussion is on the Spiritual work of Mercy: To Forgive Offenses Willingly.

"Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." The Our Father

This morning's talk has an objective of helping us to allow God to enrich our relationships. Scripture tells us that if we live in Christ that we will have Abundant Life. More so, we will become an agent for God's Work.

A popular view in society is that forgiveness is weakness. For most Americans, Christ's message of forgiveness is difficult to comprehend. It's sourced deeply within a walk with Jesus and the Holy Spirit, which is grounded in compassionate, unyielding faith in God.

Many of us experience resentment of some kind or another in life. Many times the grievance is caused by a misunderstanding, or expectations not being met, or an inadvertent snub, or being the butt of someone's idea of a dumb joke, or...fill in the blank. Most of the time we do not even remember the event or situation with any clarity; however we always remember the ugly feeling that it left with us.

Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does make the future more agreeable. After all, the hurt is real. But it is what we do with that hurt that is important. Recognize that one's distress is coming not from what happened, but from the thoughts that we have about what happened. Our thoughts are within our control.

*Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future.*

It is important to put energy into looking for ways to achieve happiness, instead of wasting energy by continuously reliving the negative experiences in our minds.

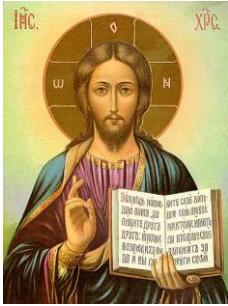
Forgiveness makes you stronger.

Shortly we will be discussing a deeply moving story about Saint John Paul II and how he gave us all a superlative example of forgiveness in his life: an encounter between a saint and a Moslem assassin. It is a glimpse into a life that is a Holy Life in totality, a life made up by Holy Moments.

You may find the inspired words that will help to fulfill the special God given Mission Statement that is unique to each man. St. John Paul was given Abundant Life by saying yes to God's call and thus gives life to his Mission Statement. You too have a special mission and are planted in places, times and relationships to be a witness to Christ.

Each of our various relationships and interactions, with others in all walks of life and with all you come into contact with; has a special message that is to be delivered. You are the Messenger. You have a unique Mission Statement.

What happens to our lives when we make a shift in our attitude and admit that Jesus is our Savior and invite Him into our heart of hearts? Let us listen attentively to the wisdom found in Holy Scripture, our Catechism and in Modern Comment.



### **Ephesians 4:31-32 – Forgive Firstly**

All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.

### **Luke 17:4 – Forgive Always**

And if he wrongs you seven times in one day and returns to you seven times saying, 'I am sorry,' you should forgive him.

The Word of the Lord

## **Catechism**

### **2840 - Forgive Others to Make Room for the Holy Spirit**

Now - and this is daunting - this outpouring of mercy cannot penetrate our hearts as long as we have not forgiven those who have trespassed against us. Love, like the Body of Christ, is indivisible; we cannot love the God we cannot see if we do not love the brother or sister we do see. In refusing to forgive our brothers and sisters, our hearts are closed and their hardness makes them impervious to the Father's merciful love; but in confessing our sins, our hearts are opened to his grace.



## **Modern Comment**

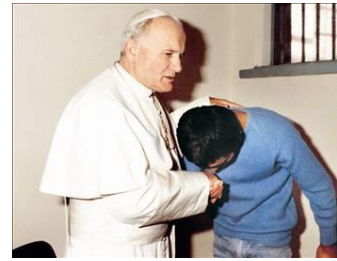
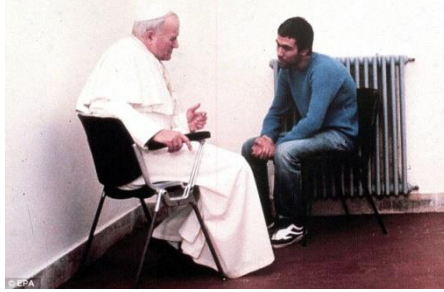
### **TO FORGIVE OFFENSES WILLINGLY: The Power of Forgiveness**

We all experience resentment: resentment when someone cheats us, resentment when we are accused or punished unjustly, resentment when someone doesn't treat us the way we want to be treated, resentment when life doesn't seem fair to us, and so on. Having resentments isn't such a bad thing – it is part of the Human Condition. It is the holding on to those resentments that causes problems.

Years ago I saw an incredibly powerful picture in the newspaper. It was a picture of Pope John Paul II in the jail cell of the man who had tried to assassinate him. The Pope and his attacker were sitting face to face, both leaning forward, their heads almost touching. The Pope was holding the hands of the gunman, as if listening with great intensity to someone for whom he had affection. It was an intimate scene of two men engaged in a very personal conversation.

Pope John Paul had gone to visit his would-be assassin in prison to forgive him, and the scene was their conversation of forgiveness and reconciliation. This is an amazing feat that these two would be seated so close together in a jail cell. The Moslem extremist pumped two bullets into the future saint from close range in St Peter's Square, one bullet passing through his abdomen and another narrowly missing his heart.

John Paul spent 5 hours on the operating table and had part of his intestines removed. His life would never be the same. At the time, I did not understand how anyone could forgive a person who tried to kill him.



It is no accident that all the world's great religions emphasize the need for forgiveness. What great spiritual teachers throughout history know for sure, is that forgiveness helps the forgiver even more than it helps the forgiven. For as long as a person holds a resentment or grudge against another person, the person with the resentment suffers much more than the person who is the resented one.

This is a strange paradox. We are angry at a person, so much that we punish them by staying angry, being resentful, perhaps even hating that person. Who are we really hurting with our vengeful anger? Are we hurting the person we want to hurt? Think about it. Whose body holds the anger? Whose jaw tightens? Whose fists clench? Whose blood boils? Whose mind is obsessed with thoughts of vengeance and retribution? Who loses sleep nursing their anger? Whose digestion is upset? So...who is really being hurt here? The person who you are mad at...or you?

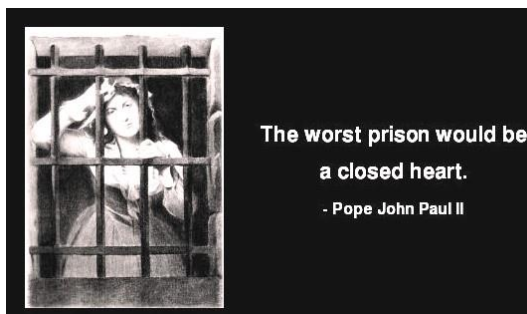
What does it get you to continue nursing your old wounds and resentments?

It keeps you a prisoner. You have no freedom when you are carrying the burden of anger and resentment.

Until you can forgive others (not forget – just forgive) and let go of your resentments, you cannot find lasting peace and happiness.

Resentments will poison you. Give them up. It is time to Forgive Offenses Willingly.

We're all richer and better—and more like Jesus—when we put our faith to work with the Works of Mercy.



Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

Psalms 51:2

To **forgive** is to set a prisoner **FREE** AND discover that the prisoner was you.

- LEWIS B. SWEDS

**I Forgive You.**

**-GOD**

PEOPLE MAY NOT REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT YOU DID OR WHAT YOU SAID,  
BUT THEY WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL.

**Questions to Focus on:**

1. What part of this message spoke most clearly to you?

---

---

---

2. Has there been a time in your life that you found it difficult to forgive someone? How did that situation turn out? Explain.

---

---

---

3. Is there a person in your life that you need to forgive? Any idea about how to do it? What would you do differently in the future with regards to forgiveness?

---

---

---

|                  |                    |                           |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>6/25/2016</b> | Leadership Meeting | 8 AM Sacred Heart Library |
| <b>7/9/2016</b>  | <b>Men's Group</b> | <b>7 AM Mass</b>          |
| <b>7/23/2016</b> | Leadership Meeting | 8 AM Sacred Heart Library |
| <b>8/13/2016</b> | <b>Men's Group</b> | <b>7 AM Mass</b>          |
| <b>8/27/2016</b> | Leadership Meeting | 8 AM Sacred Heart Library |

**Men's Group  
Calendar**

**A Man who never quits is Never Defeated.**

**Saints** are holy people, just regular human persons who lived extraordinary lives. Saints responded to God's invitation to use their unique gifts. They are teachers and guides for us. God calls each one of us to lead a life of exceptional holiness.

**ACTION PLAN**

This week I will do my best to listen to God's will in my life by:

- Creating a daily prayer practice.
- Seeking God in prayer and being quiet in His presence.
- Paying more attention to God's Blessings in my life.
- Asking Jesus for help in becoming a better servant.
- Practice Forgiving others.

## Nine-Step Forgiveness Exercise

1. Make a list of all the people you feel have wronged you in some way; write down what each one did and why it's not OK.
2. Acknowledge that those things did happen, and that they did hurt you.
3. State out loud that you forgive this person(s) for the wrong that have committed.
4. Recognize that your distress is coming not from what happened, but from the thoughts that you have about what happened. The event is in the past. Your thoughts are within your control.
5. When you feel yourself getting upset over what happened, practice stress reduction techniques to calm your body's fight or flight response. Losing oneself in Prayer is the best way to do this.
6. Another thing you can try when you start getting upset about a past experience is to ask yourself, "What am I thankful for?" Ask this repeatedly until you feel better.
7. Put your energy into looking for ways to moving on, instead of wasting your energy by continuously reliving the negative experiences in your mind.
8. Know that the best revenge is a life well lived. Forgiveness is about taking back your power.
9. Amend your grievance story to include how you moved on.

The Weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the Strong! Mahatma Gandhi



**Lord, God and Savior, by your love you draw me to yourself. Forgive me – the sinner that I am, and fill me with every good thing, not withholding even the gift of your most beloved son. Come dwell in my heart.**

**Send forth your Holy Spirit to guide me in your path. Make me worthy of your love, and teach me how to forgive as you forgave.**

**Thank you for your tender mercies. I ask you to bless my family, friends and those who I meet in my comings and goings. Where there is joy, give them continued joy. Where there is pain or sorrow, give them your peace and mercy. Where there is self-doubt, release in them a renewed confidence. Fill their every need with your Holy Grace.**

**You are indeed my Lord, God and Savior. Amen**





12/8/2015 – 11/20/2016

## The Corporal Works of Mercy

1. To feed the hungry.
2. To give drink to the thirsty.
3. To clothe the naked.
4. To harbor the harborless.
5. To visit the sick.
6. To ransom the captive.
7. To bury the dead.

## The Spiritual Works of Mercy

1. To instruct the ignorant.
2. To counsel the doubtful.
3. To admonish sinners.
4. To bear wrongs patiently.
5. To forgive offences willingly.
6. To comfort the afflicted.
7. To pray for the living and the dead

Remember,  
You Don'T  
Forgive  
Someone  
For His Or  
Her Sake  
- You Forgive  
Them For  
Your Sake.

Remove the pain by forgiving. Allow a place for Jesus to reside in your heart.  
Put your Faith into Actions.

May God Bless You.  
St. Hilary Men's Group

**Dear Jesus, let me become a more Forgiving Man – toward others and my self—so that I may experience healing, peace, and renewal, and be a Blessing to others. Amen.**