

24TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR A – 2020

Jesus said, “Forgive your brothers and sisters, not seven times but seventy-seven times.” Forgive unconditionally. Forgive without counting the cost. Who among us can forgive like that?

There is a beautiful story about forgiveness. Two high school students argued about something. They got into a fight. Tom, out of control, pushed Jim falling from second floor to the ground. Jim was taken to the hospital and afterward pronounced dead. Tom, then, was put in jail. Consequently, he was abandoned by his parents who, in distress, moved away from their son.

Jim’s parents were in great despair, too, because of the loss of their only child. But the more they missed their son, the more they prayed for forgiveness, and the more sacrifice they tried to do for the boy’s killer. Since they learned that Tom was abandoned by his parents, they regularly visited him in prison for many years, and finally adopted him as their son.

After many years in prison, eventually, Tom was released. He continued his studies and finally became a doctor. He got married and had a successful life. He lived with his foster parents. He loved them more than ever, and dedicated his life to take care of them in their old age.

The example of forgiveness in this story is exactly how Jesus challenges us to forgive others: “not only seven times but seventy-seven times.” Forgive without counting the cost. We may not be able to forgive unconditionally as Jesus demands us, but we may ask ourselves: “Can I forgive as the parents of Jim in the above story have forgiven Tom?” Yes, I think we can, if we open our heart and allow God’s love to dwell in us.

We the people of the United States of America are commemorating the 19th Anniversary of September 11. The death of several thousand people is never forgotten; and the pain, the sadness, the sorrow, and the cries of their families, relatives, and friends never end. However, this anniversary should teach us a perfect lesson of forgiveness, even it is not easy to forgive...

A seminarian friend of mine always says: “it is not easy to be a Catholic.” It sounds like a joke; but it is so true. If we are asked: “how often do you forgive your brothers and sisters if they sin against you?” how do we answer this question? Perhaps, with honesty we may say: “I can forgive but I cannot forget.” Normally, if somebody hit me, I certainly would hit him back. But Jesus demands us: if somebody hits you on one cheek, give him another cheek as well, just because you are a Christian – a follower of Christ.

In the Our Father, Jesus taught us to pray this very clearly: “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” In the first reading today from the Book of Sirach, we learn the same lesson: “Forgive your neighbor’s injustice; then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven.” If you forgive others, the Father in heaven will also forgive you. Jesus said: leave your offering at the altar and go making peace first... That’s why we exchange the sign of peace before receiving the Communion.

Indeed, forgiveness is one of many difficult things, but Jesus himself had set an example of forgiveness for us to imitate; on the cross Jesus prayed for those who crucified him: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Have you ever forgiven and then prayed for somebody who hurt you? How could we answer Jesus if he asked us this question? The parable in today’s gospel challenges us with this question: “Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?”

We may laugh at the absurdity from the wicked servant in the parable. His master has just forgiven him a huge debt, but he cannot forgive his fellow servant “a much smaller amount.”

When we sin, we come before God with a humble contrite heart and sincere repentance asking forgiveness, and God forgives us all our sins. Should we not forgive our brothers and sisters’ faults in the same way? We all are sinners who owe God infinite debt. There is no way we can ever pay our debt to God. God with great mercy and compassion will forgive us, even a huge debt. However, only one requirement for us to be forgiven is our generosity toward those who sin against us. Jesus reminds us again and again: “Unless each of you forgives your brother and sister, the Father will not forgive you.”

We know that it is not easy to forgive unconditionally. However, as the followers of Jesus Christ, let us learn from him to forgive and to love, for “the Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger and rich in kindness.”

As we pray for peace and forgiveness, we hope that we practice what we pray – to be the persons with loving kindness and forgiving heart, to forgive our brothers and sisters, “not only seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

MASS INTENTIONS

(from Sunday, September 13 to Saturday, September 19)

Sunday	8 a.m.	SC ...	Richard Astin (repose)
Monday	8 a.m.	SC ...	for Michaela Andrues (special intention)
Tuesday	No Mass
Wednesday	8 a.m. for Guido Mori-Prange (for health)
Thursday	8 a.m.	SC ...	Anthony Dinh Minh Hoang (repose)
Friday	8 a.m.	SC ...	for Kathy Drady & Family (thanksgiving)
Saturday	8 a.m.	SC ...	for Walter Echo (for health)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Last Sunday, we received an exciting news that we would be able to move indoor for Mass from this coming Sunday and that we would be able to resume the regular Sunday Mass schedule. Unfortunately, there was another news released by Marin County on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 announcing that **the State is delaying churches (and businesses) reopening for indoor**. So, I have no choice but asking you to continue our current schedule until further notice. **There is only one outdoor Mass every day, including Sunday, @ 8 am, at St. Cecilia Church, Lagunitas.**

Here is the link for more information:

<https://www.marincounty.org/main/county-press-releases/press-releases/2020/hhs-covid-hhs-hold-tier-one-090820>

Thank you for your patience.

- Please join with others across the nation for the **40 Days for Life Fall Campaign**—40 days of peaceful prayer and vigil (Sept. 23 – Nov. 1, 2020), with masks and social distancing, on the public sidewalk outside the Planned Parenthood abortion business at 4th & H St. in San Rafael. Further information and participant sign-up calendar are available at <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/san-rafael/>, or contact Ruth Ann Cawley, phone 415-383-6681, email racawley60@gmail.com.