

7th Sunday of Ordinary Time (Year C)

Overview: One of the hardest challenges of Christian life is loving and forgiving our enemies. Forgiveness is not ignoring wrongdoing, but canceling a debt, just as Jesus has canceled ours. Reflecting on our own hearts, are we truly living out the mercy that God calls us to?

Main Points

- **Forgiveness is central to Christian life** – Jesus commands us to love our enemies and forgive those who have wronged us (Luke 6:27-28).
- **Forgiveness is not excusing sin** – It is canceling a debt, but the damage done still needs to be addressed.
- **God's mercy transforms us** – When we forgive, we reflect God's love, as seen in David's mercy towards Saul.
- **Receiving mercy requires giving mercy** – Jesus teaches that we will be forgiven as we forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15).
- **Forgiveness leads to healing** – Holding onto resentment harms us more than the person who wronged us. Forgiveness doesn't just set *them* free, but sets us free.

Relevant Bible Verses

1. **Luke 6:27-28** – "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you."
2. **Romans 12:19-21** – "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."
3. **Ephesians 4:31-32** – "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."
4. **1 Samuel 24:10-12** – David spares Saul's life despite being hunted by him, showing mercy instead of revenge.

Quotes from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)

- **CCC 2842** – "This 'as' is not unique in Jesus' teaching: 'You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect'... It is impossible to keep the Lord's commandment by imitating the divine model from outside; there has to be a vital participation."
- **CCC 2843** – "It is not in our power not to feel or to forget an offense; but the heart that offers itself to the Holy Spirit turns injury into compassion and purifies the memory in transforming the hurt into intercession."

Action Items

- Identify someone you need to forgive and ask God for the grace to do so.
- Make an act of the will to forgive, even if emotions don't follow immediately.
- Read and reflect on the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:21-35).
- If possible, seek reconciliation with someone you have been holding a grudge against.
- Go to confession to receive God's mercy and extend it to others.

Reflection Questions

Have I truly forgiven those who have hurt me? Or am I still holding on to resentment?

Do I trust in God's justice and mercy, or do I seek my own revenge?

How does my forgiveness (or lack of it) reflect God's love to those around me?

Who in my life needs to experience God's mercy through me?

Rap Summary

Forgive. Let go, even if the hurt runs deep, For God's mercy is ours, but not just for us to keep.

Jesus paid the debt, and wiped clean the stain of sin. Make an act of the will to forgive and you will win.

Love your enemies, bless, and pray; let bitterness not cloud your way.

As King David spared King Saul, let God's mercy shine bright, Reflecting God's love, His mercy, His light.

Reasons to come to Mass each weekend

Hebrews 10:24-25 - "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Exodus 20:8 - "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy."

Luke 22:19 - "Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

Acts 2:42 - "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

John 6:53-54 - "So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.'"

Psalms 122:1 - "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"

Matthew 18:20 - "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Colossians 3:16 - "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."

Additional resources to learn more about God and the Catholic faith

- Check out the resource list available on www.frmerkley.com
- Catholic Answers: <https://www.catholic.com/>
- Word on Fire: <https://www.wordonfire.org/>
- Formed: <https://formed.org/>
- The Coming Home Network: <https://chnetwork.org/>
- Catholic Exchange: <https://catholicexchange.com/>
- Dynamic Catholic: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/>
- The Augustine Institute: <https://augustineinstitute.org/>
- Ascension Press: <https://ascensionpress.com/>
- EWTN: <https://www.ewtn.com/>
- The Catholic Company: <https://www.catholiccompany.com/>
- Busted Halo: <https://bustedhalo.com/>
- CatholicCulture.org: <https://www.catholicculture.org/>
- The Thomistic Institute: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/>
- Ignatius Press: <https://www.ignatius.com/>
- Catholic Education Resource Center (CERC): <https://www.catholiceducation.org/>