

Reflections

Volume 23

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St. Paul Ministry

July 2017

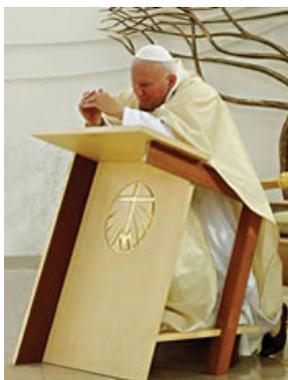
Arguments, Grudges, Mercy And A Story of God's Love

Blessings to All

I remember a saying... "To err is human and to forgive is Divine". Most of us have heard this and it rings of truth. The origin of this phrase was in a poem written in 1711 by the poet Alexander Pope. In the poem *An Essay on Criticism*, Part II, Pope explains that, while anyone can make a mistake, we should aspire to do as God does, that is, show mercy and forgive those that offend us or hurt us. I think Mr. Pope had the Holy Spirit working with him because it shadows the Divine will of God in one of His great attributes... **Divine Mercy**.

All of us practice this act of forgiveness from time to time, especially parents. Parents exhibit this virtue many 100's of times during the raising of our children. If you are a parent, you know this is true. I know it rings true to me as a parent.

The examples of Mercy are so numerous, that there is not enough paper to write them all down. Here are but a few examples... When you refuse to engage in vicious rumors or gossip about someone... that is Mercy. When you accept an apology from a person who got upset with you about some minor matter... that is Mercy. When you hold your tongue in an argument with your spouse, as a sign of love and forgiveness... that is Mercy. Or when your child spills milk all over the couch, when you have told them not to eat in the living room... they look up and see you staring at them and then they say ... "Mom, I'm sorry", and the look on that face tells you the child is scared and wants to be back in your good graces again. And you say, "Well, I know you sorrow, but next time, don't bring food into the living room....okay?" That is Mercy.



Pope John Paul II had a great desire for the Church to reach out to Jesus for His Divine Mercy. His homily on the first universal Divine Mercy Sunday in 2001 is a wonderful read. I will not put it down here, but the central core recalls Jesus words to Sr. Faustina one day: **"Mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to My mercy" (Diary, 300).**

You can read Pope John's entire homily at www.divinemermercysunday.com/popes-homily.htm.

A Grudge From Childhood Escalates



There is a story I want to share with you. A story of two siblings. Annie and Jeff. These are not their real names.

Kids fight, as kids do about silly stuff and most times in the heat of the argument, something is said or done that hurts the feelings of the other.

Annie was the older sister and Jeff was 4 years younger. He and Annie

loved each other and spent a lot of time together. But one day, Annie said some mean things to Jeff in a typical brother and sister argument. Jeff started crying and got very mad and Annie reacted by sticking her tongue out and continued to make fun of him.

Annie forgot all about their fight the next day but Jeff kept thinking about it and eventually it became a deeply rooted grudge. As they grew up, Jeff shunned his older sister more and more. His mood changed to one of avoidance to Annie. This went all throughout their teens. They both went their separate ways. Annie kept trying to understand Jeff and was always nice to him when they were together.

In time Annie was planning her wedding and called Jeff the day before the wedding to remind him to please come. But Jeff on the day of the wedding was nowhere to be seen. Annie looked for him and asks many of the guests if they had seen him. She was hurt but forgave him and chalked it up as water under the bridge. After the wedding and before she went on her honeymoon, she decided to call Jeff to make sure he was okay and that he was not in a accident. He answered the phone and Annie asked if everything was alright since she did not see him at her wedding.

"Well, yeah, I'm okay. I just got busy and forgot. What's the big deal anyway," Jeff replied. His voice was filled with anger and Annie could tell something was bad wrong. "Jeff is everything okay, you seemed to be always angry with me and I don't know why? Do you want to talk about it?" Annie was nice and wanted nothing more than to put whatever was bothering Jeff with her, behind them. Annie knew

that his response said in anger was a big lie. She said "Okay Jeff. I really missed you at my wedding but I just want you to know, that I love you and anytime you want to talk, please just call me okay?" Jeff was quiet and did not reply.

Just before Jeff hung up the phone, Annie spoke again "Jeff, I want you to know that I love you and whatever is bothering you and if it has anything to do with me, I am sorry and want you to know that I love you and want us to resolve any issues that are keeping us from growing closer. Can we get together soon over lunch to talk about us?" Jeff said "Sure. I'll let you know when." Jeff's childhood grudge against his sister had never been resolved for all these years.

The next day, Annie and her husband were driving to their honeymoon destination in Colorado. There was a patch of black ice on a turn and her husband lost control of the car. Both were taken to the hospital. He had only a broken arm and fracture on his right leg. However Annie was put on life support and not expected to live. She was in very critical condition. Her husband began calling members of the family to let them know and ask for their prayers.

When he got the Jeff's number, the phone rang and rang and then went to voice mail. Jeff was there at the time, but recognized the number of his sisters' phone and decided not to answer. Instead he returned to playing his video games and turned up the volume so he would not hear the message. Sometime later, he saw the message light blinking and decided to just erase it before hearing the message.

A few days later, one of Jeff's friends told him how sorry he was to hear that his sister Annie had died. He was shocked. "What? When? How did it happen?" His friend said that she was in a car accident a few days ago and taken to the hospital and put on life support. She was in critical condition and her husband had called the family members. Those that could went to the hospital and gathered at her bedside to pray for her as they removed her from life support. Jeff now realized that the call from the husband was to tell Jeff about his sister. Great remorse set in on him. The grudge he carried against Annie for all these years would never be resolved now. He then remembered Annie calling him to ask if they could have lunch to resolve any issue they had.

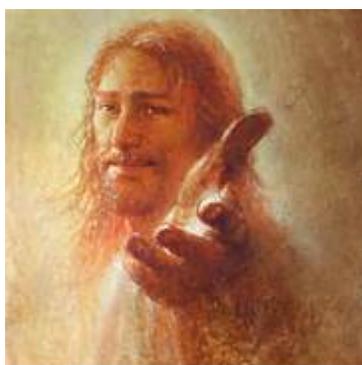


At the funeral, he walked up to the casket and saw his dead sister. Tears welled up in his eyes. The anguish in his heart was tearing at him. All the years of hating his sister convicted him. For as he stood there weeping....he could not even

remember what they fought over many years ago when they were kids.

In his sorrow he was heard by the husband standing near him as he whispered..."Annie, please forgive me. What I thought was important...this grudge I had against you...I don't even remember why I carried this burden against you for so long...I wasted years of friendship with you and kept to myself....not allowing you to be in my heart....now I can't say to you...I am so sorry. Forgive me."

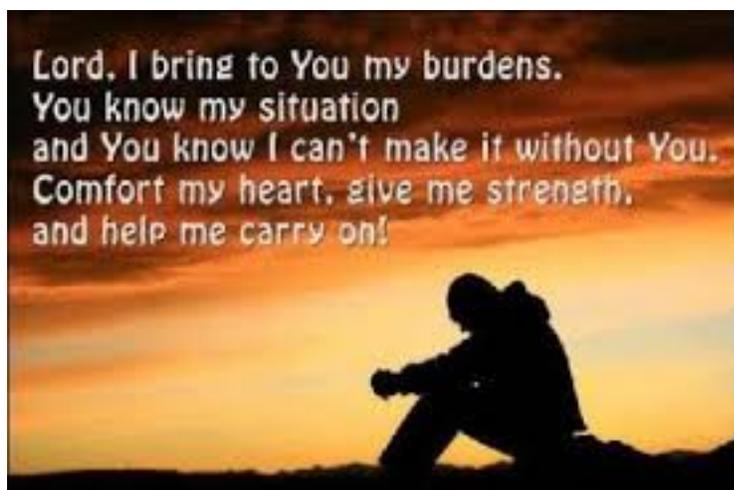
The husband was touched and put his arm around Jeff. "Jeff, I am sure Annie heard you. She always put your name in front of the Lord when she received communion. And I know she forgives you."



If you carry a grudge, let it go. Forgive...Let God have it. Be free of it. Live in peace. Don't live with the poison in your soul another day. Forgive.

Jesus says, "Forgive and live in peace with each other. It is time to give me your pain and I will refresh your spirit".

Forgiveness is not about the other person. Forgiveness is God's gift to **us to release us from the control of someone who has hurt us.** When we retain a grudge, we give someone power over our emotions. Without forgiveness, just the thought of an offender can send acid to our stomachs and heat to our faces. But when we forgive, we release to God any right to vengeance or restitution. Forgiveness puts our relationship with God back in proper alignment. We acknowledge that He is the Judge, not us, and that He has the right to bring about any resolution He chooses. Forgiveness is the choice to trust God rather than ourselves with the outcome of what hurt us.



Arguments can turn into grudges. If a family member has an argument and cannot escape the mental trauma because they constantly relive it, then a grudge and seeking revenge becomes an open door for the devil to waltz into their daily lives. It is his coin in the game he plays with our souls. Resolve to bring any grudge that is festering to confession. And give it to Jesus to handle.

12 Of The Most Inspiring Quotes from St. Faustina's Diary



1. **Great love can change small things into great ones, and it is only love which lends value to our actions.** And the purer our love becomes, the less there will be within us for the flames of suffering to feed upon, and the suffering will cease to be a suffering for us; it will become a delight! By the grace of God, I have received such a disposition of heart that I am never so happy as when I suffer for Jesus, whom I love with every beat of my heart." (303, page 140)



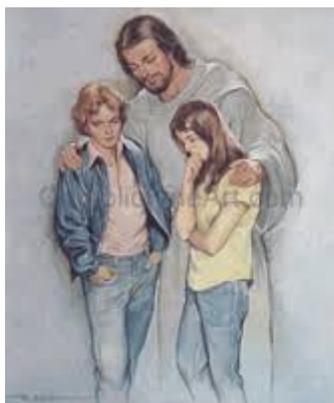
2. "I will not allow myself to be so absorbed in the whirlwind of work as to forget about God. I will spend all my free moments at the feet of the Master hidden in the Blessed Sacrament." (82, page 42)

Mary has chosen the better part (Luke 10:42)

3. "A soul does not benefit as it should from the sacrament of confession if it is not humble. Pride keeps it in darkness. The soul neither knows how, nor is it willing, to probe with precision the depths of its own misery. It puts on a mask and avoids everything that might bring it recovery." (113, page 63)

4. "O my Jesus, You have tested me so many times in this short life of mine! I have come to understand so many things, and even such that now amaze me. Oh, how good it is to abandon oneself totally to God and to give Him full freedom to act in one's soul!" (134, page 74)

5. **"He who knows how to forgive prepares for himself many graces from God.** As often as I look upon the cross, so often will I forgive with all my heart." (390, page 175).



6. "When I see that the burden is beyond my strength, I do not consider or analyze it or probe into it, but I run like a child to the Heart of Jesus and say only one word to Him: "You can do all things." And then I keep silent, because I know that Jesus Himself will intervene in the matter, and as for me, instead of tormenting myself, I use that time to love Him." (1033, page 392)

7. "O Christ, if my soul had known, all at once, what it was going to have to suffer during its lifetime, it would have died of terror at the very sight; it would not have touched its lips to the cup of bitterness. But as it has been given to drink a drop at a time, it has emptied the cup to the very bottom. O Christ, if You Yourself did not support the soul, how much could it do of itself? We are strong, but with Your strength; we are holy, but with Your holiness. And of ourselves, what are we? - less than nothing..." (1655, page 587)



8. "Although temptations are strong, a whole wave of doubts beats against my soul, and discouragement stands by, ready to act. The Lord, however, strengthens my will, against which all attempts of the enemy are shattered as if against a rock. I see how many actual graces God grants me; these support me ceaselessly. I am very weak, and I attribute everything to the grace of God." (1086, page 406)

9. Jesus, we entrust ourselves to your mercy "Everyone in the world can belong to this group. A member of this group ought to perform at least one act of mercy per day; at least one, but there can be many more, for such deeds can easily be carried out by anyone, even the very poorest. For there are three ways of performing an act of mercy: the merciful word, by forgiving, and by comforting; secondly, if you can offer no word, then pray-that too is mercy; and thirdly, deeds of mercy. And when the Last Day comes, we shall be judged from this, and on this basis we shall receive the eternal verdict." (1157-1158, page 424)

10. "I am love and Mercy Itself. There is no misery that could be a match for My mercy, neither will misery exhaust it, because as it is being granted – it increases. The soul that trusts in My mercy is most fortunate, because I Myself take care of it." (1273, page 459)



11. "I remind you, My daughter, that as often as you hear the clock strike the third hour, immerse yourself completely in My mercy, adoring and glorifying it; invoke its omnipotence for the whole world, **and particularly for poor sinners; for at that moment mercy was open wide for every soul. In this hour you can obtain everything for**

yourself and for others for the asking; it was the hour of grace for the whole world – mercy triumphed over justice.'" (1572, page 558)



12. "Today the Lord said to me, 'Daughter, when you go to confession, to this fountain of My mercy, the Blood and Water which came forth from My Heart always flows down upon your soul and ennobles it. Every time you go to confession, immerse yourself entirely in My mercy, with great trust, so that I may pour the bounty of My grace upon your soul. When you

approach the confessional, know this,... that I Myself am waiting there for you. I am only hidden by the priest, but I Myself act in your soul. Here the misery of the soul meets the God of Mercy. Tell souls that from this fount of mercy souls draw graces solely with the vessel of trust. If their trust is great, there is no limit to My generosity. The torrent of grace inundate humble souls. The proud remain always in poverty and misery, because My grace turns away from them to humble souls." (1602, page 568)

Crystal McVea Died, Saw God, And Tells Her Story To All Who Feel Unloved

Crystal McVea wasn't having a dream. She had died and says she woke up in heaven. Crystal remembers, "And it was this God that I had run from my whole life."

Her journey away from him began when she was molested at 3 years old. "I grew up believing that I was disgusting and broken and filthy," says Crystal.

Crystal went to church with her mother. When she was eight she accepted Christ and was baptized. She hoped that would cleanse her from the guilt and shame of being molested. But the abuse continued until she was 12 years old.

"I decided that there were two options," says Crystal. "Either one, there was a God and He didn't love me for whatever reason, because He hadn't stopped the things that had happened in my life. He hadn't saved me. Or two, there was no God."



In her teen years, Crystal started using drugs and alcohol and was promiscuous. By the time she was 21, Crystal was a divorced mother with two children. Finally at 28, she settled down and married Virgil and they had twins. Ten months later, in December 2009, doctors performed a routine procedure that triggered pancreatitis. She had complications and ended up with a 110 degree fever. Her mother, Bonnie came to the hospital. Bonnie says, "She didn't look right. She looked swollen to me. They had put her on a pain pump."

Crystal remembers, "I felt very calm and very peaceful. And I remember opening my eyes and seeing my mom sit at the chair at the foot of my bed. And I told her that I loved her."

Bonnie remembers, "She felt cold. And when I looked up, her lips were blue. And she wasn't breathing. And I turned around and her face was black and I just started screaming, 'She's dead, she's dead.' The nurse told me, 'You need to leave,' and I told her, 'I am not going anywhere.'"

For the next 9 minutes doctors and nurses tried to resuscitate Crystal. About that time, Crystal's husband Virgil arrived. Virgil remembers, "Everything went through my mind. I didn't know if she was alive. I didn't know if she was dead."

Bonnie says, "I know why they didn't want me in there. It's violent. And so her 9 minutes in heaven were my 9 minutes in hell."

While the team worked to revive her, Crystal says she was in heaven. Crystal recalls, "The first thing I remember becoming aware of was that I was still me. And I was still the me who had just told my mother that I loved her and died. And I was very aware of the fact that I had just died. But I also was the me that had existed from the moment that God had created me. The light came to me as if I was in the middle of the tunnel. Yet it went on for eternity. I remember being so at peace and so bathed in this light and this love."



She knew she was in the presence of God. "I didn't see a face," says Crystal. "I didn't see any features other than this beautiful light. And words like 'amazing' and 'perfect' and 'beautiful,' they fall so drastically short. I could not get enough of Him. I could not breathe enough of Him in. I could not get close enough to the light, and the light was

all over me."

Then Crystal says she tried to ask God a question. Crystal says, "I wanted to know why He didn't love me. Or why He lets bad things happen. And yet as I stood in front of Him and I faced Him and I fell to my knees, and I raised my hands, the question I called out to Him was, 'Why didn't I do more for You?' Because in an instant, He revealed His true self to me which is love. I had never truly worshipped God ever in my entire life. But I fell in front of Him and I worshipped Him. And as I lay there in worship in awe of this Creator, I remember saying, 'I could worship You for eternity.'"



Crystal traveled with God down a tunnel toward the gates of heaven. She noticed a small child ahead of her. Crystal remembers, "She wore a bonnet on her head and she had a little white basket in her hand. I watched her pick her basket up and dip it in the light. She would scoop it and then she would dump the light out as if it was water. And the light would cascade out of her basket and she would throw her head back. And she would laugh. And every time

she laughed, every time she moved, my spirit began to swell, as if it was a balloon with love."

God revealed to Crystal that she was seeing herself at three years old. Crystal says, "She was me at the moment the enemy stepped into my life and whispered that I was worthless. that I was broken, that I was disgusting, and that I got everything I deserved. She was the 3-year-old that heard that God didn't love her, that He had abandoned her, that He had forsaken her, and that God didn't exist. And, He allowed me to know that He had allowed me to look through His eyes and to see the truth. And the truth set me free."

All of Crystal's doubts about the existence of God and His love for her faded away. "I remember what it felt like to be in chains," says Crystal. "And I remember the moment that He took them from me. I was free. And He didn't just say, 'Crystal, I love you.' He allowed me to experience His love and His love almost made me explode."

Then Crystal says she heard her mother calling her name. Crystal remembers, "And I said, 'Can I go tell her that I'm okay?' "And He said, 'The choice is up to you.' And I turned away from this light to go and find where her voice was coming from. And when I turned, He said, 'Tell them what you can remember.' And I remember calling back, 'I'll remember everything and I'll be right back.' And I looked down through the floor of this tunnel of heaven, and it was as if I was looking at a million shimmering diamonds. And the instant that I noticed those diamond-like substances, I was back in my body."

Crystal woke up in the hospital surrounded by the medical team. Crystal says, "And I turned to my mom who was crying and I told her that I was in heaven and that I was with God, and that I was in the most beautiful light. And that I was okay." Crystal left the hospital 8 days later. She'll tell you she left there a different person. "My life has completely changed," says Crystal. "The person that died in that hospital room was not the same person who came back in so many different ways. But the difference is that I know that there is a God who loves us. I know that there is a ***Father who really is listening to us, who really is holding us.***"

"People often ask me, 'What is your message? What message did He send you back with?' "And it is so simple. That it just doesn't matter who we are, where we've been, what's been done to us, what we've done; (but) that His love is so vast and so great that it encompasses everything. And that we have that love, not for anything that we've done to deserve it, but because He finds us worthy and because He gives us the choice to choose Him." You can see her video of her experience at: <http://www1.cbn.com/700club/nine-minutes-heaven>

Bible Verse for the Month

Jeremiah 20:10-13

**"I hear the whisperings of many:
'Terror on every side!
Denounce! let us denounce him!'
All those who were my friends
are on the watch for any misstep of mine.
'Perhaps he will be trapped; then we can
prevail,
and take our vengeance on him.'
But the LORD is with me, like a mighty champion:
my persecutors will stumble, they will not triumph.
In their failure they will be put to utter shame,
to lasting, unforgettable confusion.
O LORD of hosts, you who test the just,
who probe mind and heart,
let me witness the vengeance you take on them,
for to you I have entrusted my cause.
Sing to the LORD,
praise the LORD,
for he has rescued the life of the poor
from the power of the wicked!"**



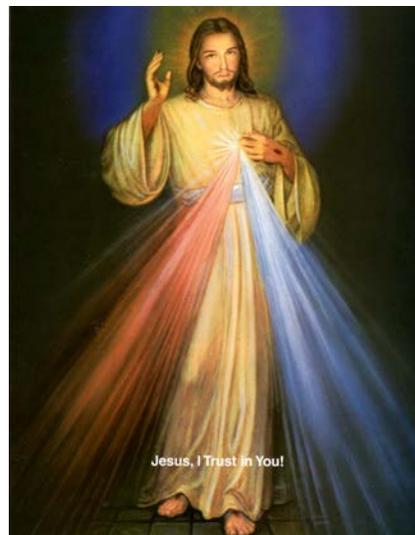
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Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.



“I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me
will not walk in darkness, but
will have the light of life.”

John 8:12



Jesus, I Trust in You!

St. Paul Ministry, Cypress, TX