

Rectoría San Juan de Dios
XXIV Sunday of Ordinary Time-Cycle A
Sir 27, 33-28, 9; Ps 103; Rm 14, 7-9; Mt 18, 21-35
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The Correspondence of Forgiveness

Forgiveness is not an isolated act. When it happens, when a person pardons from his heart, this action becomes an event; once one offers forgiveness, there is a before and an after. Everyone's life changes—the life of the one who received the forgiveness, the life of the person who gave it, and the life of the whole community—because forgiveness is capable of changing both individual and social behavior.

Forgiveness is not born from a mental reflection or for convenience; it is born as an interior decision, made in love. The origin of forgiveness is God Himself; it is His love. For this reason, we can say that our forgiveness has a correspondent—the forgiveness that we have first received from God, that forgiveness that made us free and happy, that made us rich in the love of forgiveness. Once we have experienced it, we cannot be so mean-spirited as to not multiply its goodness and its benefit to those who owe us less than that which has been forgiven us.

To forgive from the heart, we must be moved in the correspondence of forgiveness, we must forgive through God; this is essential, especially for those who have felt so hurt, so wounded that they consider it impossible to grant their forgiveness. From the correspondence of forgiveness, we find the way to communicate the joy and the freedom of being pardoned.

How important it is to exercise this spiritual correspondence when we live the “law of retribution,” as they did in the time of Christ; when we have integrated into our daily speech expressions like “settle accounts;” when we can see that an inauthentic and incomplete forgiveness leads to new forms of individual and social slavery!

We want to offer forgiveness as a gift from God, the forgiveness whose origin is the mercy of God, because:

1-Forgiveness heals.

It is only if we offer forgiveness that we heal our body and our soul; on the contrary, rancor and anger eat away at us and take us to the corruption of the grave. Forgiving is the only way to obtain the health that comes from God.

How healthy are you today?

How important it is for us to clarify the experience of physical and spiritual health, to permit the goodness of forgiveness to deter our sickness, our desire for vengeance, and our sad condition of decline.

2- Forgiveness gives us new life.

We don't live just for ourselves. Our life is not set adrift; we belong to each other in Christ who died and rose for us.

Our suffering, the wound that has been caused us by someone who has hurt us is not the center of our life, but only Christ and the wounds of the Cross. Our wounds are united to the unfathomable mystery of the pain and suffering of all of humanity in Christ.

It is a grave error to continue putting our wounds at the center of our life; and worse yet, making those memories and feelings the dynamic of an old, poor, and sad life.

What a pity that after many years, someone has not healed, that someone remembers the offense that was done to him, reopening the wound, even reenacting it—his eyes filled with anger, suffering, and tears, his face flushed—and most important, returning to suffering! Forgiveness allows us a new life in Christ.

3-Forgiveness makes us free.

Forgiveness changes lives. The action of forgiving is a unique event like an earthquake that has its epicenter in God and multiplies in aftershocks of goodness and liberation.

Our forgiveness does not just originate from us as a moral or ethical attitude; it doesn't arise in isolation but is informed by correspondence with the forgiveness that originates in God, who loved us even while we were still sinners.

To forgive seven times, from the words of Peter, could mean a sufficient number of times to forgive or to always forgive or to forgive perfectly. Christ would have understood from Peter: Must I forgive perfectly? And He would have answered, you must pardon perfectly (seventy times seven). But here we want to interpret what Jesus said to him: "*You must continue to forgive as long as you have the desire for revenge.*" Because only in that way are our own wounds healed and is the mercy of God confirmed in the aggressor.

Finally, we must understand that he who is forgiven receives the forgiveness as a gift, a transcendent gift, a true

gift from God. The person who is forgiving only makes the love in the forgiveness correspond to the love that comes from God with His pardon. Then, and only then, does the character of life change and does the forgiveness become a unique event capable of shaking the earth, as did the forgiveness of Christ from the Cross.