

Christ Our Hope Catholic Church

Faith In Laity Corner



24th d Sunday Ordinary Times

Skin To Forgive

Reading: Sir. 27:30- 28:7; Mt. 18:21-35

As human beings on this earth we are witnesses to so many things around us both good and evil. Yet, one of the most difficult tasks in the life of a Christian, a follower of Christ, is to find the will to forgive. Yes, it is the most valuable of our human gifts, but one of the most challenging to honor. Let it be said that to truly forgive is NOT an easy task; but it is the principle hope for our salvation. The readings of week 24 of the Church year, directs us to forgive. *Forgiveness is not automatic in human nature; it is achieved only through Grace, and it has to be painstakingly cultivated.*

“Wrath and anger, these also are abominations,

yet a sinner holds on to them.” (Sir. 27:30)

Our human nature tends to dwell on the faults and wrongs committed against us, for as long as we can. It has been documented and well researched that unwillingness to forgive, will cost the *holder* damage to their emotional, psychological and physical health.

“Anyone nourish anger against another

and expect healing?” (Sir. 28:3)

Without forgiveness for whatever reason, there is anger, which could evolve into wishes for revenge for the grievances conceived. There are so many reasons to pause and reflect on the need for forgiveness, from a national, political, personal and historical level. God has pronounced the verdict for those who keep this pent up anger.

“The vengeful will face the Lord’s vengeance...” (Sir. 28:1)

God has announced that forgiveness is not so much a choice, but that our very lives depend on being able to forgive others... and move on. If we expect mercy from a merciful God, then we must extend this mercy to others.

*“Can one refuse mercy to a sinner like oneself,
yet seek pardon for one’s own sins?” (Sir. 28:4)*

The bitter pill of Christianity is to accomplish this hurdle *of being able to forgive* the faults of others, being mindful that we too have ours.

*“Do not be angry with your neighbor;
and overlook faults.” (Sir. 28:7)*

To engrave in our mind, the frequency of forgiveness; the Gospel points to what Jesus says about this serious effort, when the question was posed to Him.

*“Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him?
As many as seven times? (Mt. 18:21)*

As far as we are concerned that seven times (7) is the Biblical number of completion. Yet Jesus was not satisfied with the complete number of seven.

*Jesus answered, “I say to you, not seven times
but seventy-seven times.” (Mt. 18:22)*

He was changing the concept of *forgiving most of the times*, to be always forgiving, to have forgiveness as your *second nature*. How do we manage this forgiveness? You have to have a forgiving spirit, one that is not weighed down by the actions of others, whether substantiated or not. Forgiveness has to be the *skin* which covers you. How do you acquire such Grace? Only God can grant this type of skin. As we pray for the ‘*skin of forgiveness*’ we are mindful that, there is pain and questioning with this Grace. Yet, without this nature of forgiveness, there is the reality of God not turning His eyes of mercy upon us.... Not one of us can really afford that, can we??

We remember the pain of those who have loss of families they love, through injustice, violence, nature, economic plight, slander and are trying to find ways to for their hearts, even in the face of the hatred of others. In these times remember the storm tossed and earthquake shaken people near us.

Faith in Laity Corner is a weekly review of Sunday's readings written by
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