



24th Sunday Ordinary Time

17th September 2023



A central part of every Mass is when we pray the Our Father and say, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sinned against us." The Gospel from this Sunday's Mass focuses on Jesus' parable of the unforgiving servant and begs the question, "What does it mean to receive and give forgiveness?"

We are commanded to forgive by God because forgiveness is all about love. Remember, the two greatest commandments are to love God and to love others. There is no way to forgive without loving and there is no way to love without forgiving. As humans, we are prone to making mistakes which may upset people but it is also easy for us to fall into bad habits or do things which we immediately regret. If we want to stay together in fellowship with God and each other, then we must learn to forgive. In short, if we are obeying God's command to love Him and His creation, then we have to know how to forgive.

The parable teaches us that when God forgives us He forgives not just partially; God forgives us completely and unconditionally. We have to get this to sink into our minds because only forgiven people can forgive others. When we have understood how much we have been forgiven, we can take a first step to forgive others. The next point that we need to understand is that we are to love and forgive people for who they are, not for what they do. It is much easier to forgive a friend or a member of our families but this is where we must remember what forgiveness is about. We are not forgiving the person for what he did, but for who he is: a human being created by God. Furthermore, we are acknowledging that they are humans, and are therefore just like us: imperfect. It may help us also to remember that whenever we have a conflict, it is not always the fault of the other person. Sometimes we are the one at fault. We don't love people because they are good, but because they are also people like us and made in the image and likeness of Our Father.

Loving Lord, we think of the children and young people close to our hearts, know that they are precious in your sight and so we place them into your hands today. Strengthen and nurture them. Be with them in their coming in and going out, at home and at school. In their sports, activities and clubs, their friendships and their quiet times. Mould them in your image, forming and reforming through the positive influence of those whose lives cross theirs, through the love and example of those who care for them and through the constant love of your Son, Jesus, who walks alongside them each step of their lives. Amen

God of goodness and mercy,

Support us and guide us in these tricky times. Look after our loved ones and all members of society who are finding times difficult and upsetting.

Let us work together with support, friendship and love. Amen.

"Love follows knowledge."

Saint Catherine of Siena

In addition, this week let us pray for

- ◆ those children, families and staff who have joined Springhill as they start the next chapter of their lives;
- ◆ all those around the world whose lives are being affected by flooding or fires.
- ◆ all those connected to our community who are unwell, upset or mourning.



The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy.

Psalm 102