

St Teresa & St John Southworth Churches, Cleveleys

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Sunday : 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Gospel:

Matthew: 18:21-35

Peter went up to Jesus and said, "Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me. As often as seven times"? Jesus answered, "Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times.

"And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servant. When the reckonings began they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; but he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions to meet the debt. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet. 'Give me time' he said 'and I will pay the whole sum.' And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let me go and cancelled the debt. Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized by the throat and began to throttle him. "Pay what you owe me' he said. The fellow servant fell at his feet and implored him, saying, 'Give me time and I will pay you.' But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt. His fellow servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him. Then the master sent for him, 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?' And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart."

Gospel Reflection : Forgiveness - For Whom?

One of the meanings of the parable in today's Gospel is that God's forgiveness is unconditional and amazing. The huge debt is a way for Jesus to say that the forgiveness of the first man was like the forgiveness of God. Of course none of us go through life without needing forgiveness in things both big and small, and knowing that we have received it is like switching a light on in a dark room. Forgiveness has to be both offered and received in trust. We are to trust that no matter what our past has been, the present is full of the brightness of forgiveness which can flow around the world, as it flowed from Jesus on the cross, from where he even forgave those who had tortured and killed him.

So as we all know, forgiveness is rarely easy. As C.S. Lewis wrote : "Everyone thinks that forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive". However, it is not just with Jesus' example that we learn to forgive, it is with his help too. It is not easy to understand the mind of God. He sees goodness where we see none; he showers blessings where none seem to be deserved. Yet even with our limited vision we can be sure he is near us whenever we call him.

Notices

The New Covid 19 Regulation, banning groups of more than six people from meeting inside or out, from this Monday, 14th September, does not apply to places of worship. The Government has included us in their exemptions. So we continue to open our churches for Mass, and for Funerals and Weddings. However, it remains important, maybe even more so at this stage in the progress of the virus, that anyone who attends feels safe enough to do so depending on your own situation. It is still your decision. At the same time we will continue to make our churches as safe as possible by all of us following the previous, important guidelines, that is - the wearing of masks, handwashing on arrival. signing in for tracking and tracing, and keeping a social distance of two metres, except for family groups, now of six or less people.

It is also very helpful if, before you leave church, you make sure the kneelers in each bench are left down. This is so that those who are going to clean after each Mass know which benches have been used. We are very grateful indeed to those who kindly volunteer to do that cleaning, as we are to those who welcome you to Mass and take your names and telephone numbers for tracing. More volunteers, of either gender, are very welcome.

This Weekend there is a Special Collection for Home Mission Sunday. The Home Mission Office, and Catholic Faith Office, exist to help to resource us to share our Faith in this country.

Next Weekend there is the annual Special Collection to support our Bishop and his expenses in caring for us.

Celebrating and Caring For God's Creation :

A Retreat using Zoom is being offered, 16-19 October, entitled 'Your Parish and Your Planet'. This is being led by the Sisters at Boarbank Hall. There is no fee, but voluntary donations will be welcome. There will be Guest Speakers and lots of practical advice. To apply simply email Sister Margaret Atkins on margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk

A Series of Online Talks Entitled "Saints, Scholars and Spiritual Masters" is being offered over the next few months, exploring great figures of Western spirituality, with well-known experts. The series is free to attend online, and each talk takes place at 7.30 pm on Thursdays. The series began on 3rd September but runs through till 10th December.

Simply register to receive a link, either only at

<https://christianheritagecentre.com.event/saints-scholars-spiritual-masters>

Or by email to events@christianheritagecentre.com

The Times of Masses for Sundays and Weekdays

St. Teresa's :

Saturdays (Vigil Mass) : 6.30 pm

Sundays : 9 am and 10.30 am

Weekdays : Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9.30 am

St. John Southworth :

Sundays : 5pm

Weekdays : Wednesday : 9.30 am

Daily Reflections for this week

Monday (Pope Paul VI)

A love of reconciliation is not weakness or cowardice. It demands courage, nobility, generosity, heroism, an overcoming of oneself rather than one's adversary. In reality it is the patient, wise art of peace, of loving, of living with one's fellows, after the example of Christ, with a strength of heart and mind modelled on his.

Scripture (Col. 3:12-14)

As the chosen of God, then, the holy people whom he loves, you are to be clothed in heartfelt compassion, in generosity and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other if one of you has a complaint against another. The Lord has forgiven you, now you must do the same.

Tuesday (from the website of St. Anne and St. Bernard, Liverpool)

You are welcome....

WHOEVER you are: young, old, black, white, asylum seeker, immigrant, gay, lesbian, tearaway, rebel, stranger...

You are welcome....

Whatever your situation: sick, healthy, unmarried, married, co-habiting, single parent, poor, rich, unemployed, employed, homeless, HIV/AIDS, disabled, bereaved, widowed, lapsed Catholic...

Whatever your experience: divorced or re-married, hurt by the Church, depressed, fearful, unforgiven, rejected...

Whatever you wish to leave behind you: alcoholism, paedophilia, child abuse, prostitution, drug pushing, drug addiction, gambling, murder, adultery, wife/husband battering, pornography, abortion, coercing into abortion, thieving, burglary, vandalism, violence...

You are always very welcome

Scripture (Matthew 18:21-26)

Peter said, 'How often must I forgive? As often as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times.

The Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he be sold, along with his wife and children and all his possessions. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet, saying, 'Be patient with me and I will pay the whole sum.' The servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled his debt.

Wednesday (Reinhold Niebuhr)

Forgiving love is a possibility only for those who know they are not good, who feel themselves in need of divine mercy, who know that the differences between the good person and the bad person are insignificant in God's sight.

Scripture (Psalm 103:8-10)

Yahweh is tenderness and pity, slow to anger and rich in faithful love; his anger does not last for ever, nor his resentment remain for all time; he does not treat us as our sins deserve, nor repay us as befits our offences. As high as heaven is above the earth, so strong is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our sins. As tenderly as a father treats his children, so Yahweh treats those who fear him; he knows what we are made of, he remembers that we are dust.

Thursday (C.S.Lewis)

In the creed we say "I believe in the forgiveness of sins". We believe that God forgives us our sins; but also that he will not do so unless we forgive other people their sins against us. No part of his teaching is clearer, and there are no exceptions to it. He doesn't say we are to forgive other people's sins providing they are not too frightful, or providing there are extenuating circumstances. We are to forgive them all, however spiteful, however mean, however often they are repeated.

Scripture (Ecclesiasticus 27:30 - 28:7)

Resentment and anger, these are foul things, and both are found with the sinner. Whoever exacts vengeance will experience the vengeance of the Lord, who keeps strict account of sin. Pardon your neighbour any wrongs done to you, and when you pray you will be forgiven. If anyone nurses anger against another, can they then plead for their own sins? Remember the last things and stop hating. Remember the commandments and do not bear your fellow ill-will; remember the covenant of the Most High and overlook the offence.

Friday (Thomas a Kempis)

In all things, have regard to the end, and in what fashion you will stand before a strict judge, to whom nothing is hidden. The patient person who, suffering wrongs, is more upset over another's malice than the harm done to themselves, who prays gladly for their adversaries, forgiving their faults from the heart, who is not slow to ask the pardon of others, who is quicker to pity than to anger, has a great and healthy source of cleansing

Scripture (Luke 6:27,-38)

Jesus said, "I say this to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly. Be compassionate just as your father is compassionate. Do not judge and you will not be judged, do not condemn and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven, because the standard you use will be the standard used for you."

Martin Bennett