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CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fr. Matt's Musings
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Forgiveness does not change or erase the past, but it can enlarge the future.

Forgiveness is at the heart of Christian love.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. (Mt. 6:12)

How many times must I forgive a brother or sister? Seven times? No, I tell you seventy seven times. (Mt. 18: 21-22)

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. (Lk. 23:34)

Take this all of you and drink from it. This is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me. (Eucharistic Prayer)

Forgive in memory of Jesus. We forgive because we are forgiven, and it is our call to grow in the merciful, compassionate love of God. However, forgiveness is hard. We are called to forgive most often those who are closest and most important to us. Each time we forgive, we open ourselves to being disappointed, hurt and offended again. Yet, if we wish for forgiveness for ourselves, we forgive others.

Forgiveness is risky; it shows us that we are not ultimately in control; it also reminds us of our own weakness and inconsistencies. Failure to forgive can lead to resentment, anger and a cold, safe heart. Remember, the measure of our love is to love without measure (SFS).

There are many translations of the Bible. One such translation is called the *Message Bible.* In the passage where Jesus tells his disciples, "If you loosen sins, they are loosed. If you hold them bound, they are bound." They interpret that passage as a personal choice and it reads as follows: "If you forgive sins, they are gone for good. If you do not forgive sins, what are you going to do with them?" (Jn. 20:22-23) What indeed? Let us accept the challenge and the hard work to forgive well.

Live Jesus!

Fr. Matt

frhillyard@olgcva.org
www.olgcva.org

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