

September 13, 2026 Homily
Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/091326.cfm>

We all know how difficult it is to forgive someone. This is why Peter's question in today's Gospel is so meaningful for us. "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive?" It seems from this question, that Peter also found it difficult to forgive. However, Peter proposes an extravagant amount of forgiveness. He suggests that we must forgive a neighbor as much as seven times. And seven times is a lot. Then Jesus says to Peter that we are to forgive each other, not only seven times, but seventy-seven times. This is a great challenge: Jesus is basically inviting Peter and us all to make forgiveness a way of life. This call does not mean that we are to allow others to constantly abuse us. Forgiveness is not a way to give permission to the wrong doer to continue acting in the wrong way. It is a way to move on, allow healing and justice to come, and be freed from grudges and hate.

When we hold grudges and spend our life being angry and resentful, storing up anger in our hearts, we can easily become bitter Christians, and bitterness is hell. Rather, forgiveness is a decision that frees our hearts from the pains of the past. If we decide today to forgive, we have to keep in mind that forgiveness doesn't mean just forgetting painful memories. Forgiveness truly means not acting out of our painful memories. When we forgive, we do not allow our pain controls us anymore. Rather, If we are always ready to move on, we lead ourselves into healing, freedom and inner peace.

We can also remember today that God forgives our sins with limitless mercy. Before God's eyes, we all are like the gentiles and tax collectors that Jesus loves to save. So. God embraces us with loving mercy and compassion, and this is how he changes the course of history: God confronts his enemies with reconciliation.

One of the great revelations of today's Gospel is this: The best way to eliminate our enemies is to make them our friends. The best way to end the cycles of violence and hate among us is by giving priority to reconciliation and loving communion among us. The best way to find healing, lasting peace and freedom is to forgive those who have done wrong to us. The response to the challenges of our current time is to follow the one who came to reconcile us to his Father and to one another. It is also important to recognize that forgiving is not easy, but Jesus himself gives us an example of how

important it is. The Risen Lord, with his wounds still open and painful, went to meet his disciples, and his first words for them were, "Peace be with you." He basically told his disciples, "After all I have gone through, my Father and I are ready to move on, because we love you, and we and still have a lot to do together for the salvation of the world".

Dear brothers and sisters, we all are broken. We all are called to forgive because forgiveness is the beginning of healing and a new life. In our sinful tendencies, we all instinctively respond to violence with violence, to hate with hate, to betrayal with vengeance. And these ways have not changed our history. Jesus invites us to change the course of our history with mercy and forgiveness. It is a way to begin a new life, it is a way to experience lasting and true joy. Every time we say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," may we express our desire to find peace and grace in the gifts of forgiveness and reconciliation.

The promise contained in today's Gospel is this: With Jesus, we can change not only our personal history, but the course of the world. With Jesus we can find, true healing and lasting peace. As we remember the 25th Anniversary of the terrorist attacks, we are also called to pray for those who lost beloved ones. But we are challenged to understand that it is through forgiveness that we can offer honor to those who died. Forgiveness will break the cycle of violence and will help us change our history.

The Universal Prayer
Sunday 13th September 2026
Twenty-Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Celebrant:

Sisters and brothers in the Lord, the Scriptures today have reminded us that if we desire God's forgiveness, then we must be prepared to forgive others from the heart.

1. That Pope Leo, celebrating his 71st birthday on Monday Will continue to proclaim the compassion of God in word and action, receive the blessing of continuing good health and be filled with saintly wisdom.

We pray to the Lord.

2. That in all of our relationships within families, with neighbors and work colleagues, in shopping and taxation, we will take responsibility to act with scrupulous justice.

We pray to the Lord.

3. That children and teenagers whose lives and education are being severely compromised through wars, natural disasters, in refugee camps and in poverty, will be a concern to us all, and especially in regard to their mental health, moral and physical safety.

We pray to the Lord.

4. That in this 'Season of Creation' leaders and citizens will work together to face the reality of climate change and be prepared to make sacrifices to alleviate the suffering caused by natural disasters, wars and thoughtless vandalism.

We pray to the Lord.

5. That the religious order of the Daughters of St. Mary of Guadalupe and the Diocese of Raleigh may experience a great increase in the number of vocations to religious life and to the priesthood.

We pray to the Lord.

6. That the life and death of family, friends and parishioners will continue to have a good influence upon us as we entrust them to God's loving mercy. We specially remember the soul of Father Michael Butler.

We pray to the Lord.

Celebrant:

Almighty God, kind and merciful, rich in compassion, receive our thanksgiving as we offer you our praise. Through Christ our Lord.