

WHAT DOES FORGIVE 70 TIMES 7 MEAN?

SUNDAY GOSPEL REFLECTION

Dear Sisters and Brothers of St. Joseph Parish,

"How many times must I forgive? As many as seven times?"

Peter thinks he is being generous. Seven was considered perfect. Jesus answers: "Seventy times seven." In other words - don't count.

Then He tells the story we all know too well. A servant owes the king ten thousand talents. That's not a debt - that's a lifetime. Billions in today's money. Impossible to repay. The king forgives it all.

That same servant goes out and finds a fellow servant who owes him a hundred denarii - about three months' wages. Not small, but repayable. And he chokes him: "Pay me back!"

We are shocked. But are we different?

How many times has God forgiven us? In Confession, every week, every time we say the Our Father - "forgive us our trespasses" - He wipes the slate clean. No record. No interest.

And then we go home and keep the record of what our spouse said, what our neighbor did, what happened in the parish ten years ago.

Forgiveness is not saying "it didn't hurt." It hurt. Forgiveness is saying "I will no longer make you pay."

The king in the Gospel does not forgive because the servant earned it. He forgives because he has a merciful heart.

We cannot give what we have not received. If we struggle to forgive someone this week, let's start not with willpower, but with prayer: "Lord, remind me how much You have forgiven me."

Then seventy times seven becomes possible.



Have a blessed week!

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Pastor