

At Mass this weekend I promised to post this about forgiveness. When we learn how to forgive / beginning with ourselves / Then we can forgive others with the help of God and truly begin to experience how to live in freedom. To love our enemies, and those who have hurt us - let us begin with forgiveness.

Matthew 18: 21-35

-Forgiveness is a difficult teaching to follow.

-The Our Father (don't forgive me unless I forgive others) – Jesus is serious..

-We waste so much energy when holding on to anger, resentment, bitterness, vengeance, grudges...You owe me.

-Holding on to these feelings robs us of happiness and joy. Steals our life, and slowly kills the soul - **From last week: Go talk to the person one on one** – Either it's resolved, or you say ok, they don't want to repair this, but I will move on with my life.

-In confession I find sometimes the last person we forgive is ourselves.

-What forgiveness doesn't mean:

-Pretending you no longer hurt – You have to be friends with the person again.

-You trust them – That everything is okay when we know we still hurt – We say; I'm not really angry anymore – **I feel like I've forgiven them – forgiveness is not based on feelings.**

What forgiveness is – IT IS A DECISION WE MAKE

-Forgiveness will not magically take away pain.

-Perhaps what was done to us cuts deeply and requires time.

-We don't have to trust them again – If someone has hurt you perhaps they have demonstrated you shouldn't trust them – Perhaps trusting again would be more foolish than would be forgiveness – **They might have to earn our trust again?**

-So how do we forgive?

-One way is seeing forgiveness through the lens of justice.

-Justice is what I owe another person, or what another person owes me.

-Forgiveness = I release you from your debt – COUPLED WITH

Justice = I know what they owe me – but I make a decision they owe me nothing.

King – “I release you from your debt” – servant says, “pay me back what you owe me.” - We see Justice and forgiveness – The king releases – the servant does not.

-One step towards forgiveness: If you have been hurt – reflect on how you have been hurt; **(eg. verbal or physical abuse)** – This action has caused me to have difficulty with trust In relationships - how I see myself – self esteem - what has been taken from me? -

This is what they owe me – the Justice owed me – Without the next step we might end up playing the victim role, which can paralyze and resist forgiveness.

-This next step - I decide with God's grace - I am not going to make them pay me back. I'm done holding on to this.

-We can still hurt, experience the wounds – We might have to consciously make the decision to forgive multiple times over a period of time – **They owe me nothing.**

A GRADUAL HEALING OCCURS WHEN I BEGIN, WITH GOD’S GRACE TO SAY A SIMPLE PRAYER FOR THE PERSON (I PERSONALLY SAY A HAIL MARY).

**-Now the hurt will not magically go away but an amazing thing begins to happen...
-Gives us a freedom to move forward – we are not holding someone by the throat saying: give me what you owe me – it was a huge deal, but I release you from the debt.**

-I am moving on – I will not let your actions bind me to the past nor in the present - **We can only do so with the help of the Holy Spirit – Grace – Confession – Ask Jesus to guide our thoughts – Trusting in the Father & May peace be with you – Amen.**

Father Vic Gournas