

5th SUNDAY OF LENT

Forgiveness

KEEPING IT REAL

Transforming our Lives in Lent



Heart of Love

Forgive me, God, for anything I did not do today which I might have done. Forgive me for any help I might have given today which I did not give. Forgive me for being selfish with my own leisure time and for refusing to give some of it up to help someone else.

Help me to learn the lesson that selfishness and happiness can never go together. Continue to teach me about your love; to grow in your love; and may I always remember that you always love me, like a precious pearl in your hand. Amen.

Act of Love

God loves us so much and forgiveness is God's greatest gift. Who in your life needs your forgiveness? Or who do you need to reconcile with in your life? Take time this week to show God's love through the act of forgiveness.

Word of Love

Forgiveness is powerful. It is a difficult thing say to another person, that they are forgiven, when they hurt us greatly. Still, we are invited to acknowledge the pain and learn to come to forgive those who hurt us. Consider the power of forgiveness in this story of Corrie ten Boom, Dutch woman and survivor of the concentration camps:

"It was at a church in Munich that I saw him, the former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbruck. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there—the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsie's pain blanched face. He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. "How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein," he said. "To think that, as you say, 'He has washed my sins away!'" His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal on the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him. I tried to smile; I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again, I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give him Your forgiveness. As I took his hand, the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me. And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness, any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself."

Reflection: Share your thoughts on this story. Why does Jesus invite us to follow his example of forgiveness?