

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

MY DEAR BELOVED IN CHRIST



On this 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time the liturgy directs our attention to the essential element of our communal and fraternal life: forgiveness.

Indeed, on this day, **Jesus invites us to forgive those who have wronged us.** The newness here lies in the call to move beyond the world's way of forgiving and to learn to forgive as Jesus does. We discover this in today's Gospel, where Peter believes he is being generous by forgiving up to seven times a number that, it is worth recalling, symbolizes completeness.

This shows that Peter is still thinking in terms of calculation. Jesus, however, goes much further: He multiplies the duty to forgive infinitely.

Today, Jesus asks us to forgive "seventy times seven times" that is, to forgive again and again for every offense committed against us by our neighbor. In fact, Jesus invites us to follow His example: He was handed over to men, mocked, tortured, and put to death on a cross. And yet, He forgave.

This concept of forgiveness taught by Jesus had already been articulated by Ben Sira the Wise in the 2nd century BC (around 180 BC) just a short time before the coming of the Messiah into the world. Thus, Ben Sira and his contemporaries had discovered the mystery of God, Who is Love and forgiveness. That is why he calls upon all friends of God to break free from the vicious cycle of hatred and enter the dynamic of mutual forgiveness and love.

God forgives everything, but He asks for one thing: that we do not grow weary of forgiving in our turn. He desires from each of us a general amnesty for the faults of others. We ought to examine our hearts closely to see if there are any blockages or obstacles to forgiveness stones that need to be removed for forgiveness brings renewal; forgiveness works miracles. Peter experienced this with Jesus and became the shepherd of His flock; **each person becomes a new creation when, forgiven by the Father, he loves his brothers.** Only then do we introduce something truly new into the world, for there is no greater novelty than forgiveness that transforms evil into good.

Beloved of God, let us ask the Lord to teach us how to forgive and how to ask for forgiveness. May He help us realize that the blessings He bestows upon us and the forgiveness He offers are immeasurable compared to whatever others may owe us. **Above all, may He grant us the grace to recognize our faults and confess them to a priest.** Let us pray. ...and finally, that our families and Christian communities commit themselves to living out forgiveness, imitating Christ on the Cross.

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Dean of Northwest Broward Deanery of the Archdiocese Miami – September 13, 2026