**Forgiveness is the Reason to Enjoy the Short Time Together**

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In the Catholic Church, September is the month of Our Lady of Sorrows. The feasts on September 14th and 15th bring out more clearly why this month is so dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows.

* September 14th is the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, while 15th is the Our Lady of Sorrows. These two feasts have one thing in common which is to express the mercy of God to humanity.
* In the diary of St Faustina, (473 – 476); the Divine Mercy prayer was taught to her on September 13th and 14th. **“Every time you enter the chapel, immediately recite the prayer which I taught you yesterday… In conclusion, three times you will recite these words: Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.”**
* The readings at Mass this weekend seem to have been specifically chosen to explain the feasts of mercy that we celebrated in the last three days (feasts of St John Chrysostom, the Exaltation of the Cross and the Our Lady of Sorrows).
* God makes His mercy available to us even before we ask. He is only waiting to hear us request it. Also, in the in the feast of the Our Lady of Sorrows, we honor her, who by participating in the sorrows of Jesus has taught us to forgive.

1st Reading: Sirach 27:33-28:7; Our first reading reminds us that we have no right to ask the Lord to forgive us if we are not ready to forgive those who offend us.

* “Forgive your neighbor's injustice; then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven. Could anyone nourish anger against another and expect healing from the LORD?”
* This reading highlights the dangers of unforgiveness to personal integrity and friendship. It also reminds us that whatever goes around, surely comes around. The ability to forgive makes a difference in the life of the other.

2nd Reading: Romans 14: 7-9; St Paul reminds us that our life is not really our own. It belongs to the others for us to serve them. Only in complete service of the other that we truly fully live.

* “None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself. For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.”
* The life of each one of us is better appreciated when it is given in service of the other person.

Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35; Peter approached Jesus and asked him, **"Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive? As many as seven times?"**

* Peter’s question seems like the limit by the culture at that time.
* Jesus did not take the question of Peter for a joke. For Jesus, forgiveness is a serious business and it must be done precisely.
* Peter was looking at this issue from only a personal and cultural point of view. But Jesus came to set a standard. Anything less than that will make nonsense of the redemptive work of Our Lord.
* Forgiveness is not easy. It needs patience; it is painful to the person who has to give it without thinking of revenge; it is showing understanding that life is short and there is no need to dissipate energy.

Forgiveness is a virtue that is placed not in the hand of the weak, but that of the strong, one who knows that the best way to use it is by being patient, meek and humble.

* Forgiveness is the most striking manifestation of the love of God.
* While talking of forgiveness, do you relate with this story? **In a place where public transport is common, it was said that an elderly woman got into the bus and sat down. At the next stop, a grumpy young lady with many bags entered and sat down beside the old woman. The young lady was hitting the elderly woman with her numerous bags. When the young lady saw that the elderly lady remains silent, she asked her why she had not complained when she hit her with her bags. The elderly woman replied with a smile, “There is no need to be rude or discuss something so insignificant, as our journey together is so short. Because I am going to get off at the next stop.”**
* The gist of forgiveness is that each of us should understand that our time together on earth is so short, obscuring it with useless arguments, annoyance, bad attitudes and unforgiveness are ridiculous waste of time and energy.
* Are you experiencing a heart break now? Are you betrayed or cheated or humiliated? Or are you thinking someone might claim to have reasons to not forgive? Take courage and know that our time together is not forever.