

### Reflection Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> Week Lent 2023

One of the great challenges in following Jesus' Way is how we understand God's forgiveness. Azariah is thrown into a blazing furnace but rather than plead for himself and the others with him, he pleads forgiveness for the whole nation. *Would* we do that? *Could* we do that?

When we ask for reconciliation is it just for ourselves or is it for our families, our communities, our nations, our world? We know that Azariah's prayer was not only heard but they all came out the furnace alive.

Jesus tells many stories about forgiveness all teaching something different about God's mercy. God's mercy is not like human mercy that comes with conditions that have to be met for forgiveness to work. The man in the Gospel who does not forgive his fellow servant despite being forgiven a far greater debt has not accepted forgiveness but only release from a debt. God does not impose forgiveness on us, we have to accept it freely and in a way that sets us free to **want to forgive** others whatever harm they may have caused us. This may be very difficult and take time but God looks into our hearts and helps us grow strong through the struggle. Jesus did not just talk about God's forgiveness but he walked the way of forgiveness all the way to the cross. We walk the Lenten journey not just for ourselves but for all those around us, friends, family and enemies.