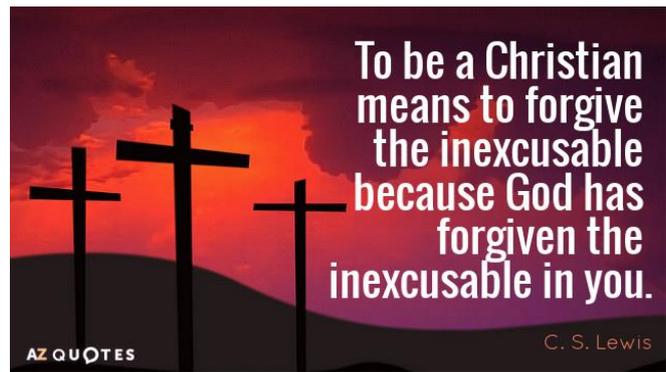


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## *THE TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (Year A)*

*13th September 2020*

Dear Friends,

If you asked a person of faith, 'Who is the God you believe in?' Each person would name their God, and these Names would differ according to the person's belief. If you asked a person of faith about the qualities of God that make them hold fast to their belief in God; You would probably hear the same adjectives used by each person. 'I believe in a God of love', 'I believe in a God who forgives'.

If we see these qualities in God, they should also be reflected in our own lives.

We cannot say that we believe in a God who loves us and forgives us if we are not trying to be loving and forgiving ourselves. It's obvious, isn't it?

But, where do so many things start to unravel ... fall apart ... cause sin and division?

Precisely in our inability to be loving and to be forgiving.

As Christians, we are called to follow Christ through His Cross so as to share in His salvation ... Eternal Life with God forever.

No-one has ever said that being a Christian is easy, but it is something absolutely beautiful.

We see the beauty of a well-lived Christian life in the stories of the Saints. Many of them were faced with great challenges; in these challenges their faith was strong enough to keep them true to God.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could get to the end of our lives and say that we had always been true to God?!

Maybe the ability to keep true to God lies in turning to Him often in quiet moments of prayer ... In these precious moments, we don't need to 'fill them with words' ... we just need to be happy to sit there in silence and stillness, allowing ourselves to be loved by God ...

There probably aren't many times in our life when we really and truly believe that we are loved by God. It is almost un-believable ...



So, what is there in us that makes us loveable?  
Not our short-temper, not our gossip and back-biting,  
not our impatience, not our refusal to go out of our way for someone ...  
and, most certainly, not our hardness of heart  
and lack of forgiveness.  
When the slightest thing goes wrong for us, we are challenged to  
continue to believe

that we are loved.

We are formed in the image and likeness of God – of course we are loveable.

And, if we are loveable, we are forgivable. Is this what you believe?

In the Gospel poor old Peter (*on whom God was to build His Church*) was battling  
with the concept of forgiveness ... We can imagine that he reached the point  
where he needed 'expert help'; so he approaches Jesus, with what he thinks  
is a generous measure of forgiveness. He just needs to hear Jesus say,

'That's right – perfect! Carry on as you are.'

So we hear Peter saying, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me?  
As often as seven times?'

Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times'.

The number 7 appears 735 times in the Bible; it symbolises perfection.

So, Peter, when he said 'as often as seven times?' thought he had found the perfect solution  
to forgiveness – whoops! Little did he know ...

But Jesus doesn't lecture Peter on the subject of forgiveness, rather he tells him the story  
of 'the unforgiving servant'. The man who owed the king a lot of money.

The king forgives him the debt, which spares not only the man but his wife and children also.

But this servant doesn't learn his lesson and rounds on the first servant he meets  
and demands repayment of the minor debt that was owed by him.

Why are we so slow to learn?

The ability to truly forgive someone who has wronged you is a strength;  
it is a grace given to you by God. If you forgive another,  
you are the more powerful person.

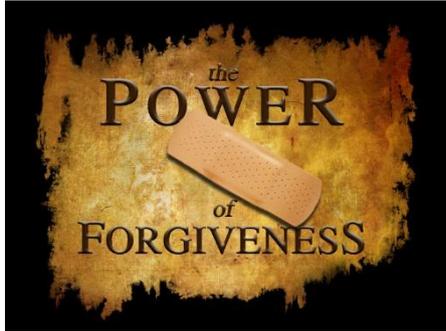
If you harbour grudges and don't forgive, gradually your heart  
becomes more and more paralysed, because the lack of forgiveness  
means that the smooth movement of the heart's muscle becomes  
hard and unpliant.

When we are hurt, we can hold onto that hurt or, we can let it go  
in an outpouring of forgiveness. If we choose to do the latter  
our heart's capacity will increase. The heart is the root, the seat,  
the source and the home of forgiving love.

We are each born with an abundant supply of forgiveness;  
will we use it? Or would we prefer to become eaten up by our inability to forgive?

The one who forgives has the upper hand.

FORGIVENESS  
doesn't excuse  
their actions.  
FORGIVENESS  
stops their actions  
from destroying  
your heart.



In years gone by there was a phrase favoured by Teachers : 'must try harder' ... Maybe, when we are faced with holding a grudge, or showing forgiveness we need to remind ourselves that we 'must try harder' to forgive.

[Today's Reading is from the Book of Ecclesiasticus 27:30–28: 7 with Psalm 102 as its response & Matt](#)

[18:21-35](#)

We pray the Lord's Prayer often; but we should always try to listen to and take notice of the words of our lips: **'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us'** ... Food for thought ...

*Fr. Michael*

*St. WJP*

## Father Christian de Lisle



Those of you who were at Mass last Wednesday, heard an announcement from Westminster about who your new Parish Priest is going to be. Fr Christian will probably take up residence in the week beginning 5<sup>th</sup> October.

We hope that those who were at that Mass have become ambassadors in the community, letting others know the latest news.

Fr Christian de Lisle was Ordained with five others, by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, on **25<sup>th</sup> June 2016** at Westminster Cathedral, in the Jubilee Year of Mercy..

Fr Christian's first post was Assistant Priest in Wood Green. Two years later he moved to Homerton, in the East of London, where he has been Assistant Priest for a further two years.

It is our loving duty to pray for Fr Christian from this moment onwards. We pray for him as he leaves a community he has known and loved ... We pray for him as he takes up his new role as Parish Priest, here in Sunbury ... We pray that the Holy Spirit will guide him, and keep him true to God ... We pray that Fr Christian will be inspired by the words, the works, and the example of Jesus ... We entrust Fr Christian to the protection of our Blessed Mother ... In the spirit of St Ignatius of Loyola, may Fr Christian do all for the greater honour and glory of God ... **AMEN**

## The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

Masses this week will be at

\*10.30 a.m. (*prompt*)

on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September

\*10.30 a.m. (*prompt*)

on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September

also

\*10.30 a.m. (*prompt*)

on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September

**Just so you know ... and ‘thank you’ ...**

During this year, 2020,  
we have received from the Inland Revenue  
£14,100.04 from Gift-Aided donations to the Offertory Collection.

This is a significant sum, and it goes without saying that, at this difficult time,  
without this bonus we would be deeply in debt.

So, **THANK YOU** all of you who Gift-Aid all your donations to the Church.

*If you pay tax, but haven't yet signed up for Gift-Aid,  
please see Maureen Brown after Mass. In many cases, Maureen can claim for  
up to four years of your past donations too!  
It really doesn't cost you anything!*

Gift Aid is a **UK tax incentive** that enables tax-effective giving by individuals

to charities in the United Kingdom. Gift Aid was introduced in the Finance Act 1990 for donations given after 1 October 1990, but was originally limited to cash gifts of £600 or more. This threshold was successively reduced in April 2000 when the policy was substantially revised and the minimum donation limit ...





