



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
September 13, 2026

Forgive and Forget?

Fr. Joseph Juknialis

Terry Anderson was an American reporter in Lebanon when he was abducted by terrorists in 1985. He was held captive by them until his release in 1991. After his release, he was asked if he forgave his captors. His response? "I'm a Christian and a Catholic, and it's really required of me that I forgive, no matter how hard that may be."

It's been said that forgiveness is the most difficult thing we have to do, simply because all too often we do not feel like forgiving. Nor is forgiveness about overlooking the injury as if to say, "Oh, that's OK. Don't worry about it." Forgiveness may not even mean being

able to be nice. Sometimes the pain may be too much.

Forgiveness as Jesus lived it is a choice one makes to care about the other. It is the gift of wanting what is best for the other even at times in the midst of our own pain. "Forgive and forget" is not always possible. At times, the pain not only lingers but also throbs as if the wound continues to ooze and weep. Then we cannot forget. Yet it is possible to make the choice to care.

What do we do if we cannot even bring ourselves to do that much? Perhaps then we can at least ask God to bring goodness into that person's life. And if that seems too difficult, then ask God to do what we cannot. That simple choice may very well be the seed that eventually sprouts into healing and peace in our own spirit. †



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A Word from Pope Leo XIV

In the Church there is...a place for everyone, and... every Christian is called to proclaim the gospel and bear witness in every environment.... Thus, this people shows its catholicity, welcoming the wealth and resources of different cultures and, at the same time, offering them the newness of the gospel to purify them and to raise them up.

GENERAL AUDIENCE, ROME,
MARCH 11, 2026



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Do I mean it when I pray, "as we forgive those who trespass against us."
- Who does it hurt when I fail to forgive?

Sunday Readings

Sirach 27:30—28:7

Remember the covenant of the Most High, and overlook faults.

Romans 14:7–9

Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

Matthew 18:21–35

Jesus answered, "I say to you, [forgive] not seven times but seventy-seven times."



Advice to a Divided Community

Paige Byrne Shortal

Today's gospel passage, and last week's as well, might be entitled "Advice to a Divided Community." Imagine for a moment all the books, articles, radio talk

shows, and advice columnists who take up this topic: *How to Deal with Difficult People*; *Beyond Anger*; and my personal favorite, *Because Strangling Isn't an Option*.

Jesus says *forgive*. He says we are to forgive over and over again. He doesn't mention any exceptions. He says forgive no matter however badly you have been treated and whatever grievous loss you have suffered at the hands of another. Forgive because you are forgiven.

Even if we've made the first step—which is to want to forgive—complete forgiveness may take a while. We usually assume that Peter's question in today's gospel refers to how many times we must forgive different offenses. I wonder if

it isn't how many times we must forgive the same incident of being wronged. Just when you think you're done with the work of forgiveness, it comes back to haunt you, and you must forgive all over again. And again. Seventy-seven times.

As difficult as it can be, life is too short to live with an unforgiving heart. In fact, life may even be made shorter by failing to forgive. Study after study indicates that those who live with resentment are more likely to suffer a heart attack. We can literally "harden our hearts." What can we possibly gain by living this way?

From today's first reading: "Wrath and anger, these also are abominations, yet a sinner holds on to them. Forgive your neighbor the wrong done to you; then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven" (Sirach 27:30, 28:2). †

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take a while.**

Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "Blessed Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen: A Media Apostle on the Road to Sainthood" by Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR

Sheen had a sharp understanding of the struggles of modern humanity: loneliness, pride, materialism, anxiety, and loss of purpose. He interpreted these through Catholic moral theology and never flinched from naming sin clearly, yet he always pointed toward mercy. He argued consistently that freedom without truth becomes chaos, and that true liberty is freedom directed toward the good. Some works are products of their era, but his best books remain spiritually fresh because they address perennial human questions: *Why am I unhappy? What is love? Why suffering? Who is Christ?* In the years since his death, Sheen's writings have continued to find new readers, and for good reason. The questions he addressed have not grown old. His voice remains what it always was: clear, hopeful, and worth following.

Note: The beatification Mass for Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen is scheduled for Thursday, September 24.

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Merciful God, give us generous hearts and open minds that we may forgive others as we have been forgiven. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

September 14–19

Monday, Exaltation of the Holy Cross:
Nm 21:4b–9 / Phil 2:6–11 / Jn 3:13–17

Tuesday, Our Lady of Sorrows: 1 Cor 12:12–14, 27–31a / Jn 19:25–27 or Lk 2:33–35

Wednesday, Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian:
1 Cor 12:31–13:13 / Lk 7:31–35

Thursday, Weekday: 1 Cor 15:1–11
/ Lk 7:36–50

Friday, Weekday: 1 Cor 15:12–20 / Lk 8:1–3

Saturday, Weekday: 1 Cor 15:35–37, 42–49
/ Lk 8:4–15



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