

Understanding Forgiveness



In the Bible, forgiveness means to cancel a debt, to pardon an offender, or to let go of resentment and the desire to seek revenge. Two parables clearly illustrate forgiveness as cancelling a debt: (1) The Parable of the Two Debtors (Luke 7:41-42): Jesus said to Simon the Pharisee, "Two people were in debt to a certain creditor; one owed five hundred days' wages and the other owed fifty. Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both. Which of them will love him more?" (2) The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matthew

18:21-45): Jesus told this parable after Peter had asked how many times he must forgive a brother who sins against him. In this parable, there were two debtors; the first debtor was forgiven his huge debt by his master, but when a fellow servant owed him a much smaller debt, he refused to forgive the debt and had his fellow servant thrown into prison.

Forgiveness is an act of the will; it is a deliberate act to cancel a debt, to pardon an offender, or to let go of resentment and the desire to seek revenge. St. Paul exhorts the early Christians in Colossae: "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." (Colossians 3:12-13) Here, St. Paul says, "As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive," he instructs Christians that forgiveness is a deliberate act which must be carried out. Forgiveness is an act of the will to let go of the hurt and to will the good of the other. In contrast, unforgiveness bonds a person to the abuser in which one remains a perpetual victim, under the control of the abuser. In this sense, forgiveness becomes a powerful weapon to cut oneself free from the spiritual bondage of the abuser, to be open to God's healing, and to be truly set free.



Forgiveness is about letting go of personal bitterness and the desire for vengeance, while leaving justice in God's hands: in the Old Testament, the Book of Proverbs teaches us, "Do not say, 'As they did to me, so will I do to them; I will repay them according to their deeds.'" (Proverbs 24:29) In the New Testament, St. Paul teaches the early Christians in Rome: "Beloved, do not look for revenge but leave room for the wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'" (Romans 12:19) Notwithstanding the spiritual benefits of letting go of resentment and vengeance, in this case, forgiveness becomes an act of faith and trust in God's justice and love.

One big misconception about forgiveness is the saying, "forgive and forget." This popular English expression dates back to the 14th century; even William Shakespeare used it in his work "King Lear." The saying likely grew from biblical verses like Isaiah 43:25, which says, "It is I who wipe out, for my own sake, your offenses; your sins I remember no more," and Hebrews 8:12, "For I will forgive their evildoing and remember their sins no more." People misapplied these verses onto the human experience, because Scripture never commands people to erase their memories of an event. Even so, forgiveness becomes all the more transformative spiritually, because in spite of the bad memories, one chooses to let go of resentment and vengeance.

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Another big misconception about forgiveness is that making excuses for other people's behavior goes hand in hand with forgiveness. Forgiveness should never be about dismissing bad actions as harmless sins. Jesus said to His disciples, "If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him." (Luke 17:3) Here, the wrongdoing is clearly noted and addressed, not excused.

Forgiveness does not require automatic reconciliation: Forgiving someone who has wronged you frees your heart from bitterness, but genuine reconciliation requires repentance from the wrongdoer, setting boundaries, and rebuilding trust over time. In this regard, you can genuinely forgive someone whom you try to avoid, because forgiveness is an internal act within a person's mind and heart, while avoidance is a means of setting external boundaries to protect your well-being.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The OCIA Period of Inquiry is now open: If you know anyone who has an interest in becoming Catholic, please ask them to contact Fr. Bill at info@hnojatl.org.

We are offering Chinese language classes next year in the Spring. Classes are held on Saturdays and Sundays. Spring Semester begins on January 9 and 10, 2027. The 2027 Spring Schedule have been posted in our church website: hnojatl.org.

If you would like to practice conversing in the English language, come and join us at our new English classes in the Conference Room after the 10:30am Mass!

The 2nd Floor of our Education Building is almost ready! We need to buy whiteboards, 50" TVs and other classroom equipment, a medium-size copier and printing supplies. Our initial budget is \$4,000. If you would like to make a donation, please use the Religious Education envelopes for this special donation.

Printed copies of the Financial Statement for fiscal year 2025 to 2026, ending in June 30, 2026 are available in this Sunday's church bulletin.

Fr. Bill will be attending the Atlanta Priests Convocation from September 15 to 17. There will be no noon Mass on Tuesday, September 15 and Wednesday, September 16.

September 20 is potluck Sunday! This is a great activity for everyone to foster fellowship in our church community. Lunch begins after the 10:30am Mass. Please bring your favorite dish to share. If you are celebrating your birthday in the month of September, we have ordered a birthday cake for you.

Prayer List: Bian Cheng Zhang, Susan Lee, Michael Tan, Bian Meiyi, Chen Shupeng, Chen Jianxin, Liang Chenjing and Xu Taicheng.
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Mass Schedule	Confessions	Bible Study
Sundays 10:30 AM (Chinese)	By Appointment	Wednesdays 10:00 AM (Chinese)
Sundays 2:00 PM (English)		
	Anointing of the Sick	Eucharistic Adoration
Mondays 12:00 PM (English)	First Sundays after 10:30 AM Mass	Sundays 9:00 to 10:00 AM
Tuesdays 12:00 PM (English)	First Fridays after 6:30 PM Mass	
Wednesdays 12:00 PM (Chinese)		
Fridays 12:00 PM (English)		
First Friday 6:30 PM (English)		