



The Magnitude of the Forgiveness

In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, when was the Younger Son forgiven by his father? (a) When he told his father he was sorry; (b) Or earlier, when the father saw his son returning. The answer is: Even earlier.

The Younger Son had hurt his father so badly when he demanded his share of the inheritance, sold it and left for a distant land without any promise of return or remembrance of his father left behind. But look at the father's actions. First, it is clear that he had been looking out for his son to return; maybe every day for the past months or even, years. Secondly, when he saw his son still far away, he was "moved with pity". Hitching up his robes, he ran to meet his son, with his bewildered servants trailing behind. Thirdly, he stopped his son's act of contrition mid-way by ordering that the best robe, a ring and sandals be placed on him. Finally, the celebration of the son's return itself.

The above response is from a man who had forgiven long ago, and who had just been hoping for his son to return. And when his son finally did return, there was only joy because the hurt caused had also long been forgotten. Jesus says that God the Father in Heaven is the 'prodigal' father. The father who is so extravagant in his love and mercy for his children. The father who has already forgiven and forgotten the hurt caused by our decision to live apart from God, and for our various unkind words and actions. The magnitude of the forgiveness comes not from the magnitude of the sin, but from the magnitude of the love. And where there is a plenty of love,

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there is plenty of mercy. Mercy, after all, is love "underserved".

But the Younger Son had to "come to his senses", return, and seek reconciliation before he could experience the forgiveness. So too must we repent, return to our Father and say: "Father, forgive me for I have sinned".

It is interesting that even in his conversion experience, the Younger Son still fell short. He appeared to be sorry not because he had hurt his father but because he was penniless, hungry and alone. He also underestimated his father's love and mercy. While confident that his father would forgive him, he may still be "punished" by being treated as one of the many servants in his father's house. But the 'prodigal' father proved him wrong. Thankfully, the magnitude of the forgiveness depended on the love of the father, and not on the son's motivation and definition. So let us not confine God's love and mercy by thinking: "I am unworthy. God will not forgive me".

Finally, and in the son's favour, he was prepared to accept whatever treatment so long as he remained with his father and in his house. So let us this Lent return to the Father's house because we want to be with him. Let us then be astounded by the peace and joy that we will experience when our 'prodigal' Father embraces us in his love and mercy.

"God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy". Pope Francis.

Reflection by Ros

Novena notes



4th Sunday of Lent

Year C

31st March 2019

Readings & Responses for the Week

Sun, 31 March	Josh 5:9-12; 2 Cor 5:17-21; Lk 15:1-3,11-32 Taste and see that the Lord is good.
Mon, 1 April	Is 65:17-21; Jn 4:43-54 I will praise you, Lord, you have rescued me.
Tue, 2 April	Ez 47:1-9,12; Jn 5:1-3,5-16 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
Wed, 3 April	Is 49:8-15; Jn 5:17-30 The Lord is kind and full of compassion.
Thu, 4 April	Ex 32: 7-14; Jn 5:31-47 O Lord, remember me, out of the love you have for your people.
Fri, 5 April	Wis 2:1,12-22; Jn 7:1-2,10,25-30 The Lord is close to the broken-hearted.
Sat, 6 April	Jer 11:18-20; Jn 7:40-52 Lord God, I take refuge in you.

WEEKDAY MASS (MON - FRI)

Time: 6.30am, 12.15pm, 6.30pm

Confession: Half an hour before Mass

SUNSET MASS (SAT)

Time: 6.30pm

SUNDAY MASS

Time: 8am, 10am, 12noon, 5.30pm

PUBLIC HOLIDAY

Time: 8am, 6.30pm

SATURDAY MORNING MASS

Time: 7am

SATURDAY NOVENA DEVOTION

English: 8am, 9.30am, 11am, 1pm, 4pm, 5.30pm

Mandarin: 2.30pm

Confession: After every Novena Service except after the 11am service.

DAYS OF OBLIGATION

Time: 7pm (Eve of Day of Obligation)
6.30am, 12.15pm, 7pm

Novena notes

Chinese Lenten Rally 2019

ACAMS will be organizing a Lenten Rally in Novena Church. The Theme for this Lenten Rally is: "Communion In Church"

The rally consists of 5 nights & will start at 7.45pm till 9.45pm

13 Mar - Fr. Henry Siew
20 Mar - Fr. John Chen Binshan
27 Mar - Fr. Peter Zhang
3 Apr - Fr. Eugene Lee
10 Apr - Fr. Terence Wee

Stations Of The Cross

Stations of the Cross will be held every Friday during Lent at 6.00pm followed by Mass at 6.30pm.



Lenten Novena

We are in the 7th Week of our Lenten Novena to prepare for Easter The Theme for this special Novena is: "The Three Pillars to Holiness" All are welcome and bring along your family and friends.

16 Feb : The Three Pillars to Holiness

23 Feb : Prayer : Our Talking to God

2 Mar : Prayer : Our Listening to God

9 Mar : Prayer : Our Living with God

16 Mar : Fasting : Our Physical Hungers and Needs

23 Mar : Fasting : Our Spiritual Hungers and Needs

30 Mar : Almsgiving : Our Works of Charity

6 Apr : Almsgiving : Our Works of Justice and Peace

13 Apr : Growing and Living in Holiness

City District Penitential Services for Lent at 8.00pm

1st April - Church of Sts Peter and Paul

2nd April - Church of St Bernadette

3rd April - Church of Our Lady of Lourdes

4th April - Church of St Alphonsus (Novena Church)

8th April - Church of St. Teresa

9th April - Church of St Michael

10th April - Church of the Sacred Heart

RCIA English Programme

We will be starting our new RCIA Programme. It will begin on 2nd July 2019 to 19th May 2020. RCIA is for adults - 18 years and above, who are interested to know more about the Catholic faith. The application form can be obtained at the Church Office. The closing date for application is on 18th May 2019.

RCIA Chinese Programme

The New Chinese RCIA programme (2019/2020) for Adults will begin on 29th June 2019.

Application forms can be obtained at the Church Office.

Holy Week Schedule

Maundy Thursday 18th April @ 8pm

Good Friday 19th April @ 10am
Passion Play in the Plaza

Good Friday Service @ 3pm

Easter Vigil 20th April @ 8pm

Please note that there will be **NO** morning and lunch time Masses on Thursday, 18th April, Friday, 19th April and there will be **NO** Novena Devotion on Saturday, 20th April 2019.

Church Canteen

Please take note the canteen will be closed on 20th April 2019.

HINDSIGHT PRAYER

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve,

I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey

I asked for health, that I might do greater things

I was given infirmity, that I might do better things

I asked for riches, that I might be happy

I was given poverty that I might be wise

I asked for power, that I might have praise of people,

I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God

I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life

I was given life, that I might enjoy all things

I got nothing that I asked for, but everything that I hope for

Almost, despite myself my unspoken prayers were answered

I am among all people, truly blessed!