

AUGUST 12, 2021  
Thursday of the 19<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time  
Matthew 18: 21-19:1

“FORGIVE FROM THE HEART.”

St. Francis of Assisi was born in 1811 as Giovanni named after St. John the Baptist but was renamed by his father Pietro after he returned from France as Francesco equivalent of Frenchman thinking that his son will follow him as businessman, and wanted him to live as man of business not as man of God. But as history told us, Francesco became the man of God. In the famous Peace Prayer of St. Francis, it says: ‘It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,’ summarizes what our gospel speaks about. Jesus Christ asked us in the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant why we need to forgive our brothers and sisters not only seven times but seventy-seven times, limitless and infinite. The parable illustrates the ridiculous act of the first servant who was given the king’s forgiveness but can not forgive his fellow servant. Here, Jesus is presenting us that God as symbolized by the king is abundant in mercy and forgiveness, and so we must do the same to our brothers and sisters who done wronged to us. If God forgives us, we need to forgive others, too.

According to Pope Francis: “We cannot demand God's forgiveness for ourselves unless we are prepared to forgive our neighbors. If we do not strive to forgive and to love, we will not be forgiven and loved either. It must be noted that in the parable the servant owed a vast sum to his master. The master forgave the servant's debt, but the man did not, in turn, forgive the debt of another servant who owed him only a small amount. To forgive is not only a momentary thing, it is a continuous thing against this resentment, this hatred that returns. Let's think about the end, let's stop hating. Think of the end! Think that you will be in a casket... and will you take the hate there? Think about the end, stop hating! Stop the resentment. It is necessary to apply merciful love

to all human relationships: between spouses, between parents and children, within our communities, in the Church, and also in society and politics."<sup>1</sup>

So, my sisters and brothers, as in the prayer of the Our Father, we say: 'And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,' let us forgive one another seventy-seven times. Let us put love, humility, forgiveness and mercy at the heart of our lives. Also, like St. Francis, we say:

"O Divine Master,  
Grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console;  
To be understood, as to understand;  
To be loved, as to love;  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.  
Amen."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.catholicnewsagency.com](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com) (Vatican City, Sep 13, 2020)

<sup>2</sup> [www.ourcatholicprayers.com](http://www.ourcatholicprayers.com)