

FEBRUARY 26, 2021  
Friday of the 1<sup>st</sup> Week of Lent  
Matthew 5: 20-26

“FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER.”

Most of the times, it’s difficult to be reconciled with one another. It’s hard to say sorry and accept our faults and moved on. We sometimes harbor grudges to persons who hurt us. There are many reasons why we are angry, mad, or annoyed to others. The gospel for today is to be one of the hardest biblical passages to live out: “first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.”<sup>1</sup> It’s difficult to do this but if we can do so, even at least in our heart, God will be pleased with our effort. How much more if we approach people whom we hurt and be reconciled.

For Jesus, it is not only killing or murder that we must avoided, anger, hatred and violence in our hearts must also be avoided. “The first person to hate his brother was Cain. God warned Cain: 'Why are you angry? Sin in couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it (Genesis 4:6-7).' Sin doesn't just happen; it first grows as a seed in one's heart. Unless it is mastered, by God's grace, it grows like a weed and chokes the life out of us.”<sup>2</sup> So, it is not enough to bring our offerings to God, go to Mass and received Him in the Eucharist, we are called first to be reconciled with our brothers and sisters, only then we can come back and be with the Lord.

“Repentance has to be expressed both to God and the person I have hurt. I cannot be reconciled to one and not to the other. We have something like this in every celebration of the Eucharist although, in practice, it can be very superficially done. At the beginning of the Communion, we together recite the Lord’s Prayer in which we all say: “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.” How often are we conscious of saying those words and how often do we really mean them? Just after that, we are invited to share a

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 5: 24 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

<sup>2</sup> [www.dailyscripture.net/](http://www.dailyscripture.net/)

sign of peace with those around us. Again, this can be done in a very perfunctory way. But the meaning of this gesture is that we want to be totally in a spirit of union and reconciliation with each other before we approach the Lord's Table to break together the Bread which is the sign of our unity as members of his Body."<sup>3</sup>

So, my brothers and sisters, let us reflect and do something about this invitation and reminder of Jesus today. Let us be reconciled to one another, forgive those who have wronged us, and those to whom we have grudges. Our offering and being with the Lord in this Eucharist will only be perfect unless at least from our hearts, we say sorry and forgive one another. Are we ready to do this? Are we ready to be reconciled? Let us ask the Lord to send us the Holy Spirit to strengthen us to do it and be at peace with one another.

I would like to borrow the prayer of Bishop Eusebius (263-339AD) as instruction for his fellow Christians regarding reconciliation and forgiveness: "May I be no man's enemy, and may I be the friend of that which is eternal and abides. May I never quarrel with those nearest me: and if I do, may I be reconciled quickly. May I love, seek, and attain only that which is good. May I wish for all men's happiness and envy none. May I never rejoice in the ill-fortune of one who has wronged me. When I have done or said what is wrong, may I never wait for the rebuke of others, but always rebuke myself until I make amends. May I win no victory that harms either me or my opponent. May I reconcile friends who are angry with one another. May I never fail a friend who is in danger. When visiting those in grief may I be able by gentle and healing words to soften their pain. May I respect myself. May I always keep tame that which rages within me. May I accustom myself to be gentle, and never be angry with people because of circumstances. May I never discuss who is wicked and what wicked things he has done but know good men and follow in their footsteps."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [livingspace.sacredspace.ie](http://livingspace.sacredspace.ie)

<sup>4</sup> [www.dailyscripture.net](http://www.dailyscripture.net)