

Reflections

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Forgiveness

“How many times will I have to forgive my brother when he offends me?” Peter’s question is always current for a Christian: Where is the limit of our forgiveness? Do we have to forgive the offences always anew and without measure?

Jesus gives us a very clear answer: The measure of forgiveness is the measure of love. And our obligation is to love without limits and, consequently, we also have to forgive without limits. So, the only thing left for us is to forgive always.

And to help us understand the rigor of his commandment, Jesus relates the parable of the wicked servant: “A king wanted to adjust the accounts with his employees. They brought forth one who owed a thousand talents.” It has to do with a fantastic sum which probably no one of us has. But we must understand the parable in its symbolic sense. God himself is the king in the parable. The enormous sum signifies our great debt to God.

Man is God’s debtor. Any child, at birth, is a millionaire. But no one becomes aware of it; no one recognizes himself as the debtor of such a great sum. And no one is concerned about giving thanks to God for all of that. In addition, man increases his debt with God. We make use of these gifts to sin by misusing them.

The servant of the parable acknowledges his fault, his guilt, his debt. Humbling himself he throws himself at the feet of the king saying: “Be patient with me and I will pay you for everything.” And at that moment an unexpected change of scene takes place: the king not only drops the punishment, he forgives his debt completely.

God is this way. God is Father. Immediately He is moved with his children. He delights in giving them gifts, but even moreso, He loves to forgive them. For God, this is his favorite occasion to show his children all his love as a Father.

Before this priority of the king, the wickedness of his servant is much more stressed: he treats his companion who only owes him a few talents, in a violent and inhumane way. And that in spite of the fact that his companion begs him for patience, repeating his same words. Perhaps we become indignant with this fact. But, do we not sometimes do the same?

In summary, the parable tells us the following: For God to forgive us our innumerable faults, we have to fulfill two conditions:

1. The first condition is to acknowledge before God that we are sinners, debtors. The first sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit in a soul is that it acknowledges its culpability. Therefore, the Saints see themselves covered with faults. But the majority of the people – who are most unsaintly – think of themselves as good persons, sinless: they do not steal, nor kill, nor commit adultery. That is why they rarely take advantage of the sacrament of confession in which man acknowledges himself as a sinner before God.
2. The second condition for being forgiven is that we also forgive others. We are refusing God’s forgiveness if we do not forgive others. Hell would not exist if men would have imitated the mercy of God because Hell is the place where there is no forgiveness and where forgiveness is not wanted.

Dear brothers and sisters, what Jesus tells us is very decisive for our salvation: “My Heavenly Father will do the same with you if you do not forgive your brother with all your heart.”

Questions for reflection

1. Is it easy for me to forgive others as I forgive myself?
2. Is forgiveness an aspect which needs to be cultivated in our family or community?

If you wish to subscribe, comment on the text or give your testimony, write to: pn.reflexiones@gmail.com

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