

September 11, 2025

Daily Reflections



FORGIVE AND YOU WILL BE FORGIVEN

By David C. Robinson, SJ

Excerpts from Today's Readings

Brothers and sisters: Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one Body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another ...

COLOSSIANS 3:12-16

Jesus said to his disciples: "To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. ...

Do to others as you would have them do to you.... Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

LUKE 6:27-29, 31, 37-38-

Reflection

We live in a society that finds ever-new ways to separate us, one from the other, and to generate ever-increasing anger and resentment. The shell of self-justification threatens to close us off from potential paths to dialog and respect. In our more balanced moments, we recognize that our spiritual and religious convictions impel us to find another path more in keeping with our professed values and desires. We realize that we cannot simply acquiesce to hypocrisy, social violence, and political manipulation. Jesus did not have patience with religious hypocrites who abused the people that put their faith in them. Nor should we turn away from the hypocrisy around us. This is not a matter of timidity or inaction. It is a matter of holding fast to what we know is true about our life in God and our desire to shape a more just and compassionate world. Jesus never lost sight of every person's possibility for conversion, whatever the failing. Neither should we.

We may sometimes feel overwhelmed by the weight of our dismay and frustration, and feel unable to hold fast to our true center of hope. The blessings of our calling to forgive and reconcile may seem beyond our capacity to sustain. St. Ignatius of Loyola recognized this personal moral and spiritual impasse in life, but also held fast to a higher potential. He exhorted his fellow Jesuits and their communities of faith, who felt unable to forgive others' 'sinful behaviors'—'If you cannot feel the desire to forgive, then pray for the desire to desire.' Ignatius believed that our deepest desires, not just our daily hopes or wishes, are a manifestation of God's desires in us and for us. Our seeking the desire to forgive, when our feelings do not match that reality, represents our connection to our most profound inner longings of soul and heart.

When we reflect on the selections from Colossians and Luke, we may feel a void of emotional response. The sheer profusion of the confounding realities we confront may leave us feeling devoid of forgiveness for those responsible. Ignatius would encourage us not to sink into a swamp of self-recrimination or despair. He would gently urge us to turn to our deepest desires for God and

God's loving spirit in our lives. This foundational truth can awaken us to our deepest loves, and help us to re-discover that inner life which points us to respond with a desire for forgiveness. This forgiveness is not an escape from responsibility or moral integrity, but a path toward possible reconciliation, which is the heart of the gospel call for our common life.

We might each select some of the simple teachings we have read, and ponder their promise for our own future walk in the world. May they help to fuel our 'desire for the desire,' as we search for a path to future reconciliation and a foundation for a better world.



Jesus Embraces the Sinner
Image created by David C. Robinson, SJ

For Pondering

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- Put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one Body.
- To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.
- Do to others as you would have them do to you.... Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned.
- Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.

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