

# **FORGIVENESS, FREEDOM & DIVINE MERCY**

*A Parish Handout for Healing the Heart*

**“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”** 2 Cor 3:17

- Forgiveness is not optional for the Christian.
- It is the path to **interior freedom**, healing, and union with Jesus Christ.

## **WHAT FORGIVENESS IS**

**Forgiveness is releasing a debt.**

- Someone has wronged you. A real injustice occurred.
- Forgiveness means **letting go of what they “owe” you** and placing them into God’s hands.

**Forgiveness is letting go.**

- Unforgiveness is a rope tying the ship of your heart to the dock.
- Forgiveness is untying the rope so the heart can move freely again.

**Forgiveness is freedom.**

- Anger and resentment enslave.
- Forgiveness breaks the chain.

## **WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT**

- Not excusing injustice
- Not forgetting
- Not reconciliation (which requires two people)
- Not weakness
- Not stuffing anger
- Not waiting for time to heal
- Not denying the hurt
- Not natural — it is **supernatural grace**

Forgiveness is a **choice**, not a feeling.

## **DIVINE MERCY & FORGIVENESS** *St. Faustina & Fr. Chris Alar*

### **St. Faustina's Diary**

#### **Mercy is required of every soul**

- “If a soul does not exercise mercy in some way, it will not obtain My mercy on the day of judgment.” (*Diary, 1317*)

#### **Forgiveness restores freedom**

- “When we forgive from the heart, all the bitterness dies, and our soul regains freedom.” (*Diary, 1693*)

#### **Mercy must be active**

- “I demand from you deeds of mercy... You must not shrink from this or try to excuse yourself from it.” (*Diary, 742*)

#### **Suffering unites us to Christ**

- “True love is measured by the thermometer of suffering.” (*Diary, 343*)
- “When I suffer, I feel closer to Jesus.” (*Diary, 948*)

#### **Mary teaches forgiveness**

- “Mary is my instructress... She teaches me how to suffer and how to forgive.” (*Diary, 620*)

### **Fr. Chris Alar, MIC**

#### **On mercy**

- “Mercy is love that seeks to lessen the misery of others.”

#### **On unforgiveness**

- “Unforgiveness is the devil's greatest poison. Mercy is God's greatest antidote.”

- “If you refuse to forgive, you block the flow of grace into your own soul.”

### **On praying for those who hurt us**

- “When you pray the Chaplet for someone who hurt you, you unleash a flood of grace into both hearts.”

### **On forgiving yourself**

- “The inability to forgive yourself is often a hidden form of pride — you are holding yourself to a higher standard than God does.”

### **On union with Christ**

- “When you forgive someone who hurt you, you are closest to Christ on the Cross.”

## **PRACTICAL STEPS TO FORGIVE**

### **1. Name the wound**

- Forgiveness requires honesty.
- Pain expressed is pain released.

### **2. Release the debt**

- Pray: “**Lord, I release my right to hold this against them.**”

### **3. Pray for the offender**

Adapt your Rosary or Chaplet:

- “Pray for me **and** (name).”
- “Have mercy on me **and** (name).”

### **4. Repeat whenever the memory returns**

- Forgiveness is a **process**, not a moment.

### **5. Entrust the person to God**

- Move them from **your hook** to **God’s hook**.

# **FORGIVENESS VS. RECONCILIATION**

## **Forgiveness:**

- One person
- Unconditional
- A gift
- Releases the offender
- Required by Christ

## **Reconciliation:**

- Two people
- Conditional
- Requires repentance
- Restores trust
- Not always possible or safe

Jesus forgave His executioners on the Cross —

but He was not reconciled with them in that moment.

## **MARY, OUR LADY OF SORROWS**

- She suffered with Christ.
- She forgave with Christ.
- She intercedes for those who struggle to forgive.

**“A sword shall pierce your own soul also.” — Lk 2:35**

- Ask her: **“Mary, teach me to forgive as you forgave.”**

## **A FINAL WORD OF HOPE**

- Forgiveness is hard.
- But every act of forgiveness makes you more like Jesus.

**“Let the sinner not be afraid to approach Me.” — Diary, 699**

- Mercy is God’s greatest attribute — and He desires to pour it into your heart.