

"Virtues to Live by"

"Our educational work should have a purpose: to elicit a change in our students, to make them grow in wisdom, to help them undergo a transformation, to provide them with knowledge, with new feelings and, at the same time, achievable ideals."

(Pope Francis 2013)

Spring:

FORGIVENESS/MERCY

Forgiveness:

You give someone another chance after they have done something wrong so they can make a new start. You let go of your feelings of sadness, anger and revenge. You show your love for the person rather than focusing on the wrong. When you forgive someone you show that your relationship with them is more important than the wrong they have done. You also forgive yourself so that you do not give up when you have done wrong or made a mistake, but have the courage to act differently and have faith that, with God's help, you can change.

OPENING PRAYER:

You beckon us to follow you on the way of forgiveness O God.

Forgive us, and make us a community of reconciliation.

You beckon our community into the fullness of life.

Forgive us, and make us a community of reconciliation.

You beckon the whole universe into wholeness.

Forgive us, and make us a community of reconciliation.

Forgive us and transform us into a community of grace.

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy;

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.

READING:

Based on Psalm 129(130)

*Out of the depths I call to you,
Lord hear my cry for help.
Listen compassionately to my pleading.
If you never overlooked our sins,
who could survive?*
Lord, help me to start again.

Your forgiveness wipes my slate clean.

Your love blots out all my sins
as if they had never happened.

Your forgiveness is like re-birth,
a chance to start again with a new, fresh life.

I have only to ask
and your forgiveness is immediate.
Lord, teach me to forgive as I am forgiven...

Teach me your life-giving generosity.
No matter who is right or who is wrong,
help me to sweep away the bitterness,
the nurtured anger
the stored-up resentment of years.
Enable me to start again.

*Out of the depths I call to you,
Lord hear my cry for help.
Listen compassionately to my pleading.
If you never overlooked our sins,
who could survive?*

Lord, help me to forgive and be forgiven.
Help me to start again. (Frank Topping)

REFLECTION

When we have done wrong it makes us feel isolated and distant from God but this is precisely when we need God most.

Focusing on our sins and those of others should not lead to self-pity, causing us to think more about ourselves more than God. Feeling sorry for ourselves will only increase feelings of hopelessness and anger.

Speaking to God will turn our attention to the only One who can really help.

Keeping a record of sins, (or holding a grudge) is like building a wall between you and another person, and it is nearly impossible to talk openly while the wall is there.

God does not keep a record of our sins: when he forgives, he forgives completely, tearing down any wall between us and him.

When you pray realise that God is holding nothing against you. His lines of communication are completely open

(Take a moment in silence to accept God's forgiveness and ask God to give you the grace to forgive someone who has hurt you.)

LIVING OUR VIRTUE

Inspire each one of us that we may help our children to:

- Know that God loves them and has forgiven their sins and always will.
- Recognise everyone makes mistakes
- Understand that good relationships with others are more important than focusing on a wrong.
- Let go of feelings of sadness or anger.
- Accept forgiveness when it is offered.
- Recognise ways they can show they forgive others.
- Understand that every day is a new beginning.

May we support our children in recognising opportunities for growth so that they can make the most of the opportunities life presents.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

God our Father, let us go forth together and in everything let us be at peace with each other. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. **Amen**

VIRTUE TO LIVE BY

Forgiveness

I accept God's forgiveness.

I show my love for God by forgiving others and myself.

I let go of my hurt feelings and give myself a new start.

I give others a new start.