

ourselves is perhaps some erroneous lurking doubt that God needs to hear our mitigation in order to forgive us. That is not so. Do we not have a tendency also to believe that those factors which might excuse our own wrongdoing are stronger than we think? On the other hand, when considering the actions of others towards ourselves, is the tendency not to be less accepting of their explanations?

Nevertheless, true forgiveness is the same whether it is between God and human beings or between human beings themselves. To forgive what can be explained away by good excuses is not Christian forgiveness. It is no more than what is fair and just in purely human terms. As C.S. Lewis concludes: *“To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you”*.

Stephen S

Entrance antiphon: Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

First Reading: Jeremiah 17 5-8

Psalm 1: Response: Happy the man who has placed his trust in the Lord.

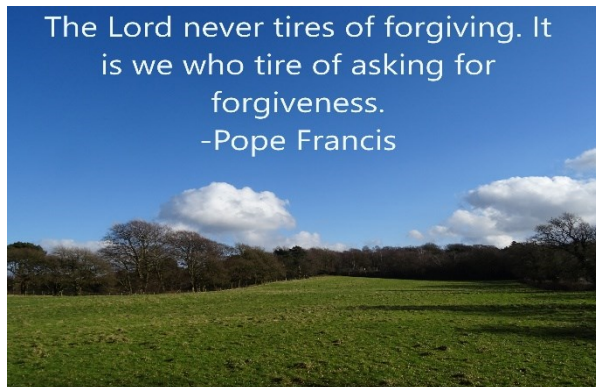
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15: 12, 16-20

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia! Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to mere children Alleluia!

Gospel: Luke 6 17, 20-26

Memorial Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.



“Sermon on the Mount”, by Henrik Olrik

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sunday Cycle C, 2022

The Creed (6): What do we mean when we say: “... the forgiveness of sins”?

The Penny Catechism explains that the phrase *‘the forgiveness*

of sins’ means that Christ has granted the power of forgiving sins to the Pastors of his Church. (John 20:23) and that sins are forgiven principally by the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance. However, as C. S. Lewis wrote in his essay ‘On Forgiveness’, to *“believe in the forgiveness of sins is not nearly so easy as I thought”*. What follows in this note is a summary of his reasons in the hope that people may find them of interest and assistance.

In the Lord’s Prayer we ask God to forgive our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. It is critically important to distinguish between forgiving sin and excusing sin. If we are not careful, we may confess our sin while trying to excuse it. Forgiveness means accepting that someone has done wrong, accepting the apology and not holding it against that person in the future. Excusing implies that the person was not really at fault in the first place and so does not require forgiveness. Often an action (or omission) is a mixture of the two. Part of the action/omission is without blame and can be excused. The remainder is the real sin and needs to be forgiven. If the action/omission is totally without excuse, then the whole of it is sinful and needs to be forgiven. When confessing our sins to God we must be wary of presenting Him with our excuses and believing that we have properly repented. All we may have done is to explain our actions/omissions, satisfied with our own excuses (good or bad).

God, being omniscient, is already fully aware of all the explanations, excuses and mitigating circumstances. In confessing we must focus on the inexcusable. Forgiveness is full reconciliation with the person who has committed the real sin, i.e. that which is true wrongdoing stripped of all explanation, excuse and mitigation. Part of the reason why we waste time in explaining