

CHECK OUT WHAT  
CATECHISM OF THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
SAYS ABOUT FORGIVING  
OTHERS  
CCC 2838-2485

# WHAT FORGIVENESS MEANS

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US

"To love means loving the unlovable. To forgive means pardoning the unpardonable. Faith means believing the unbelievable. Hope means hoping when everything seems hopeless."  
GK Chesterton

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE HARDEST CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS TO LIVE OUT?



WHAT DO YOU THINK FORGIVENESS MEANS? HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE FORGIVEN SOMEONE?



WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ "FORGIVENESS" AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



What does Fr Mike claim is one of the most radical teachings of Christianity?

What do we pray at the centre of the Our Father?

## WHAT FORGIVENESS MEANS (AND WHAT IT DOESN'T MEAN!)



- Forgiveness doesn't mean you're no longer \_\_\_\_\_.
- Forgiveness doesn't mean you have to be \_\_\_\_\_ with this person again.
- Forgiveness doesn't mean that you \_\_\_\_\_ them.

When you forgive, why do you **not** have to feel like you have forgiven someone?

When you forgive, why do you **not** have to feel like you are hurt anymore?

When you forgive, why do you **not** have to feel like you should trust them again?

## WE CAN UNDERSTAND FORGIVENESS IN TERMS OF JUSTICE.

Justice = what I \_\_\_\_\_  
or what another person \_\_\_\_\_.



IN TERMS OF FORGIVENESS THAT MEANS:  
"I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE YOU PAY BACK  
WHAT YOU OWE ME."

Retell the parable of the unforgiving servant in your own words:



## STEPS TO FORGIVING SOMEONE:

1 (JUSTICE) Write down: \_\_\_\_\_

2 (FORGIVENESS) Look at list and say: \_\_\_\_\_

# WHAT FORGIVENESS MEANS

MATTHEW 18:21-35



**Forgiveness gives us the freedom to \_\_\_\_\_.**

*Forgiveness is a big deal, so before we do any of these steps we need to ask for God's grace, for the Holy Spirit to help us, for Jesus to guide our thoughts and actions, and to trust in the Father.*



**BONUS**



Watch the short YouTube clip, [The Story of Jennifer Trapuzzano](#).

How do you react to Jennifer's ability to forgive in this situation?

Try to find any other incredible stories of forgiveness to share with others!



*Now Read Matthew 18:21-35*



Can you imagine forgiving the same person seven times? I don't know about you, but to me that sounds pretty difficult. And yet Jesus tells Peter to be willing to forgive 7 x 70 times! He doesn't mean we should keep track. Instead He's holding up for us an incredibly high standard of living - the Christian standard: be merciful as your Heavenly Father is merciful. This is tough, really tough! Is it impossible? By human standards, yes, but by God's grace, thankfully no. Jesus calls us to love and forgive others as He does if we want to call ourselves a follower of His. Jesus calls us to give and not count the cost, or as we looked at in Fr Mike's video, to count the cost and still forgive. Lack of forgiveness can enslave us, hold our hearts hostage, eat away at our joy and our ability to love. This is not living life to the full. This is not a path to joy. Jesus also knows we're weak and frail. He modelled for us how to live this way by His own life and death. He promises us all the help that we need. If we wait until we feel like doing any of this, that feeling may never come. Love is a decision, forgiveness is a decision. If you are struggling to forgive, make a decision to set your heart free, by God's grace.



**MISSION!**

ARE THERE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE THAT YOU STRUGGLE TO FORGIVE? PEOPLE WHO HAVE WRONGED YOU AND HURT YOU? PEOPLE WHO OWE YOU A DEBT, WHO HAVE COST YOU SOMETHING IN YOUR LIFE? IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU CAN START THE PROCESS OF FORGIVENESS, FOLLOW FR MIKE'S ADVICE. IF YOU STRUGGLE WITH THAT, BEGIN BY PRAYING FOR THE GRACE TO WANT TO FORGIVE THEM, AND COMMIT TO THAT PRAYER.



**PRAYER TIME!**

*Jesus, You know that there are people in my life that have caused me pain, and I'm not sure if right now I even want to forgive. But I pray now for the grace to want to make room for Your healing. Fill my heart with Your love, and grant me the grace I need to decide to take a step towards forgiveness today, no matter how small that step may be.*  
*Amen*



## CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON FORGIVENESS



- Forgiveness - Matthew West
- From the Inside Out - Hillsong
- O Come to the Altar - Elevation Worship
- Forgive our sins as we forgive - Koine Music
- A Heart that Forgives - Kevin Levar

- Forgive - This Hope Music
- Love Your Enemies - Kyle Sigmon
- Bless those who curse - Robert Martin
- O God Forgive Us - For King & Country
- Letting Go - Jeremy Camp



**Fr Mike Schmitz: Why is it so hard to forgive yourself?**



**Witness of Mercy: The Story of Jennifer Trapuzzano**

# THE CALL OF MATTHEW



Caravaggio, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Carravaggio's famous work, "The Calling of Saint Matthew" illustrates the passage in the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 9:9), when Jesus invited the tax-collector, Matthew, to follow Him. According to the story Matthew rose and followed him. In the painting, Christ (on the right, behind Peter) points to Matthew, the tax-collector, (the bearded man wearing a beret) - and calls upon him to become the apostle Matthew.

As a tax-collector, how was Matthew used to being viewed / treated by the Jewish people?

What would have been different in the way Jesus looked at him?

How is the certainty / authority of Jesus conveyed in this painting?

How does Matthew seem to be responding to this message?

How does Carravaggio draw our attention to Matthew in this painting?  
Look at his use of light / dark; hand gestures; guiding lines; facial expressions.

How do you respond to this painting?



Click here for an imaginative reflection on this scene:  
<https://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Imagination/cp-matthew.html>

- ASCEND YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY (DIOCESE OF WATERFORD & LISMORE) -



# WITNESS TO MERCY

Watch the short video clip about the incredible witness of Jennifer Trapuzzano.

Video by Knights of Columbus Supreme Council

Describe the dramatic events of Jennifer's story in your own words.



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How does Jennifer display an amazing capacity for mercy?

How do you explain her ability to forgive in this situation?

**Research the story of Kim Phuc, known as "Napalm Girl" and the moment she had to decide for forgiveness or anger.**

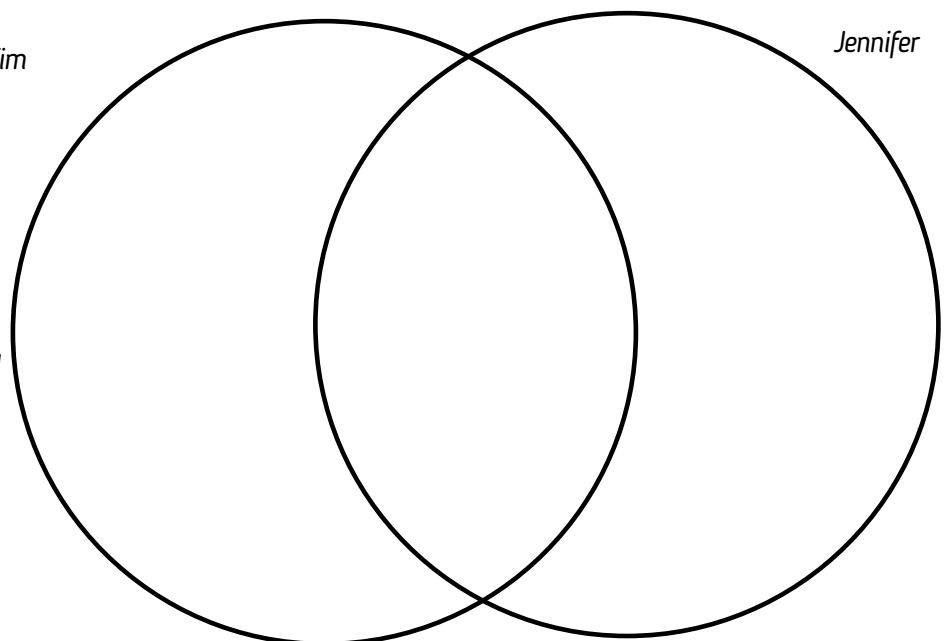
<https://news.sky.com/story/napalm-girl-spreading-forgiveness-50-years-on-12703161>

**Use the Venn Diagram to compare and contrast her story with Jennifer's.**

**Consider:** pain inflicted / perpetrator / initial reactions / decision to forgive / source of forgiveness / legacy of their witness

Kim

Jennifer



## REFLECT:

Compose a letter to Jennifer or Kim, expressing your thoughts on their witness to mercy.