

St. Mary's of the Lake, Watkins Glen, NY
St. Benedict's, Odessa, NY



Finding Peace and Healing in a Troubled World, Part II

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Finding Peace and Healing in a Troubled World, Part II

Webinar Tips

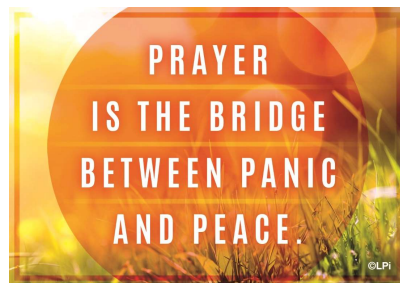
- All participants are muted to reduce background noise
- If slides are not fully visible, check at the top center of your screen for "fit to window" under arrow.
- If you would like to ask a question, at the bottom of your screen you should see a box with the letters "Q & A". Click it and you can type your question. It will show on my screen.
- In addition to the slides, you should see a video of me. It should appear in the upper right of your screen. It should not block any significant content on the slides. If it does, you can drag it around.

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Opening Prayer



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Review from Part I


(www.renewaloffaith.org/healing)

- Anointing brings spiritual healing in times of physical illness
- Reconciliation heals our brokenness with God and the Church from our sins.
- We also have broken relationships that need reconciliation and/or forgiveness
 - With family
 - With friends
 - With coworkers
 - With strangers

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Does time really heal all wounds?

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Why Not Forgive Others?

- We think the perpetrator
 - Needs to make amends **FIRST**
 - Needs to admit how they have hurt us **FIRST** (are we seeking vindication)
 - And then they must ask for forgiveness
- Regarding “first” – we recently heard on the 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time - “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” (Luke 6:27-28)

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Why Not Forgive Others (cont'd)?

- We think forgiving means
 - Forgetting
 - Making ourselves **vulnerable**
 - To being victimized again
 - To be **hurt** again

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Why Not Forgive Others (cont'd)?

- Question from Part I evaluations – “How to forgive, especially evil done by someone like Putin”
- Comment from same evaluation – “How did the Pope forgive the assassin who tried to kill him?”

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Feeling Better about Ourselves

“In order to ease the pain of their self-criticism, some people become more judgmental toward others than they are toward themselves, and the cycle of blaming and shaming continues.” (Howe, *Guilt*, 26).

We also recently heard on the 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time “Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven” (Luke 6:37)

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What is Forgiveness?

From Amy's story

“Forgiveness has nothing to do with what I am feeling. It is a decision I make because I do not want to carry around anger, bitterness, and resentment, and most of all because I choose to do God's will and forgive in spite of what I feel... But forgiveness does not mean allowing yourself to be abused emotionally or spiritually. It does mean letting go of the bitterness, praying for those who have hurt us” (Fr. Berg, *Hurting in the Church*, 117).

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Why Forgiving is ***Necessary*** for the ***Victim***?

“Anger helps no one and simply makes the bearer of the anger feel worse” quoted from a father of one of the slain girls” (*Amish Grace*, 129).

“All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice”
(Ephesians 4:31).

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Why Forgiving is ***Necessary*** for the ***Victim***?

“But here's the catch: In order to heal, we eventually need to get to a place where we do not *need* that retribution, or that apology, or any recompense in order to recover and move on...That unwillingness to forgive means subjecting myself to anger's control, allowing anger to dominate and blind me” (Berg, 115).

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Why Forgiving is ***Necessary*** for the ***Victim***?
 “To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that
 prisoner was you.” – Lewis B. Smedes”(Berg, 114)



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Why Forgiving is ***Necessary*** for the ***Victim***?

From Night Prayer on Wednesday – Ephesians 4:26-27

“If you are angry, let it be without sin. The sun must not go
 down on your wrath; do not give the devil a chance to
 work on you.”

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Why Forgiving is ***Necessary*** for the ***Victim***?
 Our desire to avoid being hurt (again) can come to dictate
 our actions. We need to be healed of the hurt so we can
 live freely.

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What If the Person...

- Doesn't admit to any wrongdoing?

“If your brother sins [against you], go and tell him his
 fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you
 have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take
 one or two others along with you, so that ‘every fact
 may be established on the testimony of two or three
 witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell the
 church. If he refuses to listen even to the church,
 then treat him as you would a Gentile or a tax collector”
 (Matthew 18:15-17).

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What If the Person...

- Doesn't want to accept forgiveness or reconciliation?
- Is mentally compromised by drug or alcohol addiction?
 - Surrendering our pain
 - Tough love
- Has died or otherwise no longer in our lives? It might seem like there is no chance to reconcile.

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Why We Might Think God (or Others) Will Not Forgive Us

- We keep doing the same things over and over - not seven times but 77 times (Matthew 18:21-22)
 - "I firmly intend..."
 - Not worthy (scrupulous)
 - Our own worst enemy
- It can be easier to forgive others than to forgive ourselves because we might give them the benefit of the doubt, but we know the internal bad thoughts we have.

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Do We Realize That We Need Forgiveness?

Quoting from St. Bernard of Clairvaux, "You will never have real mercy for the failings of another until you know and realize that you have the same failings in your soul." (Sri, *Who am I to Judge?*, 150).

Question from the Part I Evaluations

- "How can a priest not look differently toward a person when he hears their sins?"

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Do We Realize That We Need Forgiveness?

"Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove that splinter in your eye,' when you do not even notice the wooden beam in your own eye? You hypocrite! Remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter in your brother's eye" (Luke 6:41-42).

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Does God Want to Forgive Us or Punish Us?

From the Old Testament, we hold an image of a punishing God based on passages like Leviticus 24:20 that says an eye for an eye.

Yet, even in the Old Testament, God is merciful. How many times did God rescue his people? (See the repeated cycle most evident in the Book of Judges).

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The Unforgivable Sin

We see Jesus as merciful because He gave his life for us on the Cross yet there is “And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come” (Matthew 12:32).

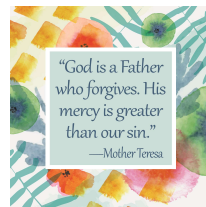
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Why We Might Think God Won't Forgive Us?

We know we struggle and/or refuse to forgive others so we assume God is like us and doesn't want to forgive us. The good news is that God is not like us!



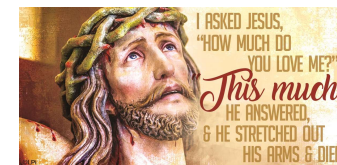
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“But God proves his love for us in that **while we were still sinners** Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:8



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Even as Jesus suffered his Passion and
hung upon the Cross, He said

*“Father, forgive them,
they know not what they do.”*
Luke 23:34

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The **only** thing
that stops God
from forgiving you
is you.

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Is Guilt Good or Bad?

“He uses a marvelous term: *“our God-given capacity to feel guilt.”* Guilt is not our enemy, not if we recognize it for what it is and learn how to profit from its ministry to us. Guilt is the voice that pleads with us to face ourselves honestly, then to make right whatever wrongs we have done to others” (Howe, *Guilt*, 13).

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Scrupulosity and are we not good enough?

- Maybe we accept God's forgiveness but then look (too hard) to find something else we have done wrong
- Is perfectionism the same as being scrupulous?
- Jesus himself said, *“The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”* (Matthew 26:41, Mark 14:38).

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To Feel Forgiven, We Must Let Go

“Sometimes the insight God gives us about our own personal history, and our hurts, is not so much an illumination or understanding that helps us make sense of it all, but rather the serenity *to stop trying to make sense of it all*. It’s the gift of surrendering it all to Jesus, bringing our wounds to his, allowing him to touch them, and discovering that Jesus is all we need.” (Berg, *Hurting in the Church*, 134-5)

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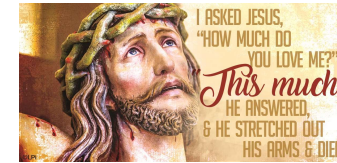


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The Source of God’s Forgiveness

God has an easier time (because his love is absolute) forgiving us than we have forgiving ourselves

- **Forgiveness is a gift we don't merit** - that's what makes it a gift, a gift to the assailant and to the victim
- Forgiveness is our request to God. It is God's choice to forgive, and He always does if we repent with a contrite heart.



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Question from Part I Evaluations

- “Can a healing Mass be as beneficial as going to a priest privately or are the same/different?”

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Leading to Next Time

“God wills that everyone be saved, not just from sin and evil but also from depression, anxiety, past trauma, difficult relationships, heartbreak, addiction, and everything else that brings us pain, suffering, and separation from the love and peace that God so desperately wants to give us” (Tighe, x).

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The Signs of Brokenness in the World

- Riots, racism, hatred
- Increasing polarization between groups
- Has COVID caused division or just made it more visible?

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Our Individual Brokenness

- Death of a loved one - Jesus wept. John 11:35
- Losing a loved one to dementia
- Understanding 5 stages of grieving can help us heal
- Abortion, our choice or another's choice
- Miscarriage
- Not feeling listened to or valued repeatedly

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Doxology at end of the Lord's Prayer

"Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
Graciously grant peace in our days,
That, **by the help of your mercy,**
We may be always free from sin
And safe from all distress,
As we await the blessed hope
And the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

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Future Schedule

- April 7th
- When you exit this webinar a short evaluation questionnaire should come up to invite your feedback.
- The slides for this presentation will be available online at www.renewaloffaith.org/healing

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Resources

Berg, Rev. Thomas, *Hurting in the Church: A Way Forward for Wounded Catholics*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor. 2017.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Second Edition. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

Guzman, Sam, *The Catholic Gentleman: Living Authentic Manhood Today*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press. 2019.

Healy, Mary, *Healing: Bringing the Gift of God's Mercy to the World*. Our Sunday Visitor: Huntington, IN. 2015.

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Kraybill, Donald B., Steven M. Nolt, David L. Weaver-Zercher. *Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy*. Jossey-Bass (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.) 2007.

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Sri, Edward, *Who am I to Judge: Responding to Relativism With Logic and Love*. San Francisco, Ignatius Press. 2016.

Tighe, Tommy, *St. Dymphna's Playbook: A Catholic Guide to Finding Mental and Emotional Well-Being*. Notre Dame, IN, Ave Maria Press. 2021.

USCCB, *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006.

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