**THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

In English the word forgive is connected with the word give. It is the same in many other languages. In other words, forgiving and giving are connected. Indeed to forgive someone is actually to give of ourselves. Not to give money or a present, but to give of ourselves. To forgive is to sacrifice part of ourselves for someone else.

Where there is no forgiveness, there the heart has set itself against self-sacrifice, against giving of itself. Where there is no forgiveness, there is hardness of heart, self-love and pride, enmity and bitterness, the refusal of the grace of God.

For why did God allow His own Son to become man, and suffer, and of His own will go up onto the Cross? Why did the Father see His Only-born Son sacrificed?

It was all an act of forgiveness. The forgiveness of the sins of humanity, and the showing of the way to freedom from those sins. This is why, in the Prayer that the Lord gave us, we pray: 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us'. Although God forgives us, we may be unable to accept His forgiveness, if first our heart is not ready, in a fit state to accept God's forgiveness, if first we have not forgiven others, if first we have not rid ourselves from our stony-heartedness.

For where there is no forgiveness, there is no Holy Spirit. Where there is no Holy Spirit, there is no forgiveness.

Christ gave us the ultimate example of forgiveness. This parable shows us that we rarely think of ourselves as being in debt to God. Forgetting that each one of us has received from the Lord a multitude of great and small gifts, and taking these gifts for granted, we are always seeking something more from God and, if we do not receive what we desire, we become insulted or irritated. We consider that, in addition to those 10,000 talents that the Lord has already given us, we should receive from Him yet more talents and, if we do not receive them, we consider ourselves offended and cheated. After all, the problem is not that we have been given little, but that the riches we have been given we have not put into circulation, but have buried them in the ground, and therefore not only do they not make a profit, but they are not enough to make sure that we can pay off our debts.

The Lord forgives us our debts, but we must forgive our debtors. But if we are to have any right to turn with this request to God, we should forget about the debts of other people to us and remember only our own debts before others. The Lord forgives us all our debts; He has enough generosity, mercy, and love to forgive any sin, but on one condition: that we also will forgive people. Everything is interconnected in life, and therefore if we are awaiting forgiveness and mercy from God, then we should be able to show mercy ourselves, which we should provide to those near and far.

Forgiveness is not the same as forgetting. We may never forget a wrong, abuse, some grievous sin done against us, but we can with God’s help, learn to forgive and practice ongoing forgiveness. In other words, we can make it a matter of prayer that God help us to forgive someone on an ongoing basis. We can pray that God heal us of our bitterness, our grudges, our enmity against others.

If someone is our debtor, let us forgive him his debt, that the mercy and grace of God would be with us always. We can all cultivate being slow to speak, slow to anger, and quick to forgive. St. Paul admonishes us to “be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Amen.