

Limitless Forgiveness

What makes seven such an important number?

It's the symbolism. It signifies wholeness, completeness, and totality. So, seventy-seven (or seventy times seven in some Bible translations) suggests infinity. Peter was exaggerating when he suggested that he might forgive his brother seven times. He presumed that if he acted in this way, his behavior would demonstrate the immeasurable extent of his personal graciousness. Jesus' response implied that there should be no end to our forgiving another. To underscore the significance of this magnanimity, Jesus offered God (in the guise of the king who forgave a huge debt) as the exemplar of forgiving.

Forgiving another's offense against us could well be one of the most difficult things we are asked to do. To ask for forgiveness does not seem as difficult. After all, when we bump into a perfect stranger in an elevator, we say, "Forgive me." But to forgive someone who has

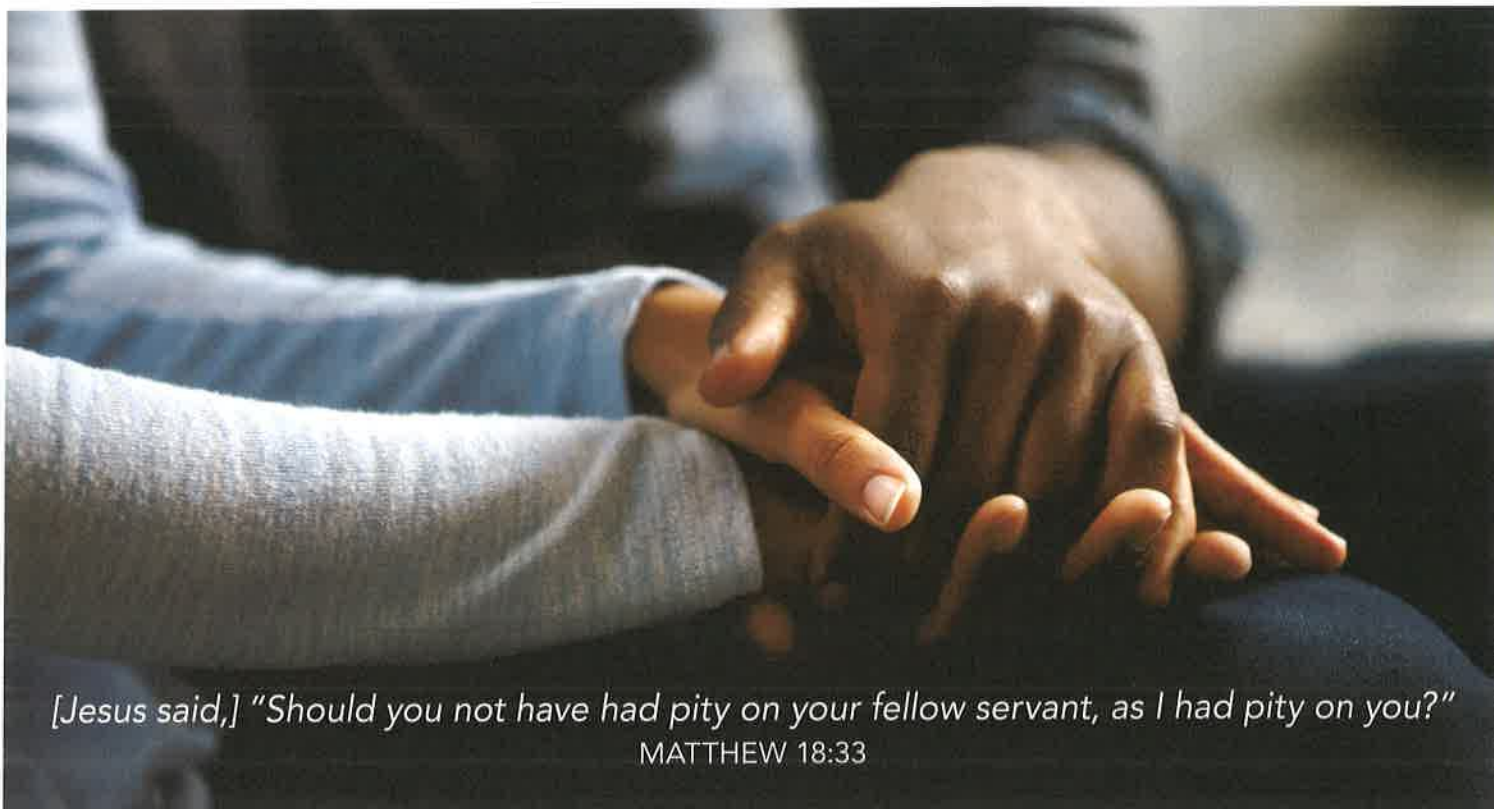
deliberately offended us, who has dishonored our sense of personal dignity, as slight as that offense might be, is neither as easy nor as casual a gesture. And yet, we must.

We all carry debts to others. Both the first reading and the Gospel passage remind us that the debts owed to us by others in no way compare with the debt we owe God, and yet God shows us compassion and forgives us. If we are grateful children of a compassionate God, we will want to be like God and we will forgive others.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR *Reflection*

- ✳ Say the Lord's Prayer slowly, reflecting on "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."
- ✳ Do you carry resentment in your heart? Does clinging to it lessen its burden in any way?



[Jesus said,] "Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?"

MATTHEW 18:33

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

905 Chestnut Street, Douglassville, PA 19518 secretary@icbvm.org ccd@icbvm.org bulletin@icbvm.org

Rev. Msgr. John B. McCann Pastor
 Rev. Leo S. Stajkowski.....In Residence
 Deacon Paul J. Hiryak, Deacon James A. Bardi,
 Deacon Charles A. Giordano
 Parish Office610 582-2411
 Parish Religious Education/CCD ...610 582-3880
 Parish Preschool610 404-8645
 Parish Website.....www.icbvm.org

Immaculate Conception Academy.....610 404-8645.....www.icaberks.org
 Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator: Wendy S. Krisak, M.A. NC, LPC, 800-791-9209
 Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator: Pamela Russo, MSW, MS, 610-871-5200, Ext 2204
 Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service: If you have an allegation of abuse against a bishop,
 please contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service at www.ReportBishopAbuse.org
 or by calling 800-276-1562

Diocese of Allentown...www.allentowndiocese.org

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – SEPTEMBER 13, 2020

The Sanctuary Lamp Burns in Memory of Stephen A. Mammarella

★ ★ MASS INTENTIONS ★ ★

SAT 5:15 PM *Living & Deceased Parishioners*
 SUN 7:30 AM *John "Buddy" Palko*
 9:00 AM *Anthony DiGuglielmo*
 11:00 AM *Laura & Pasquale Iezzi*
 MON 7:30 AM *Francis & Sara Madl*
 TUES 7:00 PM *Joseph J. Lukes*
 WED 7:30 AM *Anna Maccarone*

THURS 7:00 PM *Michael R. Santos*
 FRI 7:30 AM *John Bradley*
 SAT 5:15 PM *Stephen A. Mammarella*
 SUN 7:30 AM *Living & Deceased Parishioners*
 9:00 AM *Gregory White*
 11:00 AM *Dominic & Sophie Paolucci*

Second Collection Next Week is for Debt Reduction

Interested in becoming a Catholic? Missing one or more Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist? Want to grow in your knowledge of our Catholic faith? RCIA (The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults)

is the solution to your need and it's returning this Fall. Our parish's program will begin on Monday, October 5 and continue through Easter Week 2021.

This year's RCIA instruction and discussion will use an "in person" format with protocols and procedures in place to ensure that participant wellness and safety are maintained. Masks will be required for everyone and social distancing will be in effect.

Attendance is limited to those who require sacramental instruction or who have never participated in RCIA so advance registration is recommended.

Class sessions begin at 7pm in the church office, lower-level meeting room. All materials are provided and there is no cost to participate. Check the parish website for program information or call the office at 610-582-2411 for details and to register.

Remember in your prayers the sick of our parish: Alice Arantowicz, Madge Butto, Deb Petras, Bob Hocker, Rita Dougherty, Ken Rumler, Tony Williams, Fannie Hunter, Keith Kienle, Pat Fessler, Rita Ferry, Rosemarie Francis, Curt Miller, Loretta Hitchens, Mark McDonald, Craig Mammarella, Linda Domergue, Joe Manegold, Roseann Malcolm, Ravina Breden, Dante Stetina, Bob Thomas, Kathy Patrick, Arlene Shirley, Joseph & George Ruby, Marjorie & Walter Hansen, William Hill, Alice Smyk, Mark Vignone, Daniel Uivary, Robin Stavenski, Yvonne Runfola, Jason Leman, Ann Washko, Marian Presgrave, Stephen Gombar, John Geisewite, Christian Abeonizio, Kenneth Sutton, Jim Williams, John Strock, Geraldine Christ, Ted Reznick, Steve Mammarella, Rowena Smith, Eileen Ravert, Anthony Merlino, Geri Barth, Marcia Marks, John Fritz, Linda Bardi, Anthony Scaglione, Patricia Haas, Nichole Magee and all those suffering from the coronavirus.

Welcome new parishioners: Mr. & Mrs. Bryant Grauber

Congratulate the baptized: Paige Adeline Hartwich

Pray for the deceased: Arthur Erjavec, Leon Rogosky, David Myers

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Our parish Church of the Immaculate Conception is open each day from 8am to 7pm for private prayer and visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

Coronavirus protocols: If you plan to attend Mass or visit the church, you must wear a mask at all times and maintain social distancing.

Each Sunday, the 11am Mass is live-streamed on our Facebook Page for those who are unable to attend Mass at this time due to the pandemic. You may access the live-streaming Mass from our parish website at www.icbvm.org

Our parish office is open on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 11am-3pm. Anyone coming into the parish office must wear a mask and is kindly asked to maintain social distancing. If you call the parish office and no one is immediately available to answer your call, please leave a detailed message and your phone call will be returned in a timely fashion. Our number is 610-582-2411. Thank you for your kind consideration in this regard.

Take a Virtual Tour of Immaculate Conception Academy. Our mission is to provide a faith-filled, family-centered learning environment. Academic excellence, responsible leadership, and charitable service are modeled and encouraged by our teachers and staff. Award-winning STEM classes and clubs, art, drama, CYO sports, Spanish language classes, Resource and Speech assistance is available. Transfer Grants are available to students who qualify.
<https://www.thinglink.com/card/1317169462591356931>

Immaculate Conception Academy is seeking substitute teachers. Protecting God's Children and Clearances required. If interested please contact Mrs. Lisa Forkin at lisa.forkin@icaknights.org or 610-404-8645

Religious Education Program (CCD) will open on September 16 and 17 for in-person instruction. We have developed a comprehensive safety plan to address the challenges of in-person learning. Our safety plan, which spells out our regimen of procedures and protocols, is explained in the Welcome Back letter addressed to parents which can be found at www.icbvmccd.org. We have changed our venue from the academy to the social hall to assure the safety of our students and staff. We have also modified our schedule to ensure proper sanitizing procedures are followed.

Learning Options:

* **In-person instruction** will be held in our **social hall** with modifications that adhere to the current recommended social distancing and wellness guidelines.

* Our **homeschool option** is available and encouraged for those who do not wish to attend in-person instruction.

Our Director of Religious Education, Mrs. Dawn O'Donnell is available to address any questions or concerns you may have. You may contact her at dawn.odonnell@icaknights.org. You can also call our Office of Religious Education at 610-582-3880. Please visit our website at www.icbvmccd.org for updates, scheduled events, forms, and more.

Confirmation 2020 - Bishop Alfred Schlert will visit our parish Church of the Immaculate Conception and administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to the children of our parish on Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. We invite you to pray for the children of our parish who are preparing to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit in this sacrament of God's love.

Bereavement Support Group will meet on September 22nd, 7pm in the church office, lower level meeting room. Questions? Contact Toni at 610 404-1389

On August 27, 2020, areas of Texas and Louisiana were devastated by Hurricane Laura. In the Diocese of Lake Charles, over which the eye of the storm passed directly, many remain without electricity and drinkable water. In addition to the destruction of many homes and businesses, the parish churches of Lake Charles, particularly those near the coastal area, were destroyed or severely damaged. Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Lake Charles is helping those in need. If you would like to make a donation to these relief efforts you may do so by placing an envelope in the collection basket marked "Lake Charles Collection". Thank you for your generosity to those in need whose lives have been upended by this natural disaster. Please continue to pray for those affected by the storm.

Parish Giving.

++ SIGN UP FOR ELECTRONIC GIVING ++

Through Parish Giving, you are able to make your Sunday Offering, along with special diocesan and other contributions online!

The number of families contributing online has increased by 62% since the onset of the pandemic. Thank you for your commitment to our parish family and its Mission to proclaim the good news of the Gospel!

Won't you join us? It's easy, safe and secure. And YOU have control over your online account. How?

- + You determine when the money is withdrawn; weekly or monthly
- + Use your Credit/Debit card or your own checking account
- + At any time, you can see your year-to-date contributions
- + Best of all, you don't have to worry about missing a Sunday Collection even if you are away for whatever reason!

Go to www.icbvm.org and click on the Parish Giving link on the lower left-hand side of the home page.

Your continued generosity to Immaculate Conception is greatly appreciated! We also express our gratitude to our parishioners who have graciously mailed their contributions to the parish at 905 Chestnut Street, Douglassville 19518

Amity Township Crime Watch's Community Shredding Event - September 19th, 9am-12pm - Douglassville Redner's - Open to residents and small businesses in Douglassville and surrounding areas. Shredding is done by ProShred Security of Paoli. Donations accepted to help defray the cost of the shredding trucks. For more information or questions contact Susan at 484-269-8181.

Looking for Peaceful Retirement Living? Try St. Mary of Providence in Elverson! Call 610-942-4166 today for an appointment and walk-through visit.

Dear Padre,

We knew a beloved priest whose death was self-inflicted. What is the Church's stance on suicide?

I offer my heartfelt sympathy to you and the faith community for this tragic loss. "We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2280). Those who take their own life to end personal suffering assume a decision-making that belongs to God alone. However, the Church also acknowledges that "grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide" (CCC 2282).

At the same time, the Church relies on the compassion of God, who fully knows the intensity of suffering that triggers suicide. Therefore, the Church pastorally states: "We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives" (CCC 2283).

How, then, does the Church specifically pray for those who've committed suicide? Generally they're not deprived of full burial rites in the Church, which consoles the living and commends all of the dead "to God's merciful love and pleads for the forgiveness of their sins" (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 6). Nor are they deprived of burial in a Catholic cemetery—a sacred place that helps bring peace to those confronted by the sudden death of a suicide.

—Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR
Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org



HILARY SUSAN OSMAN / PEXELS

A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

The increase in the rates of suicide in your cities, as well as bullying and various kinds of neediness, are creating new forms of alienation....I ask you to pay special attention to [the young] and their needs. Try to create spaces...of generous and selfless love...to everyone, and not only to those who have "made it."

—MEETING WITH BISHOPS, TOKYO, NOVEMBER 23, 2019



Calendar

Monday

SEPTEMBER 14
The Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Nm 21:4b–9
Phil 2:6–11
Jn 3:13–17

Tuesday

SEPTEMBER 15
Our Lady of Sorrows
1 Cor 12:12–14, 27–31a
Jn 19:25–27 or
Lk 2:33–35

Wednesday

SEPTEMBER 16
Sts. Cornelius, Pope, and Cyprian, Bishop, Martyrs
1 Cor 12:31–13:13
Lk 7:31–35

Thursday

SEPTEMBER 17
Weekday
1 Cor 15:1–11
Lk 7:36–50

Friday

SEPTEMBER 18
Weekday
1 Cor 15:12–20
Lk 8:1–3

Saturday

SEPTEMBER 19
Weekday
1 Cor 15:35–37, 42–49
Lk 8:4–15

Sunday

SEPTEMBER 20
Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Is 55:6–9
Phil 1:20c–24, 27a
Mt 20:1–16a