

DIOCESE IN EUROPE

THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND



## SS PETER AND PAUL, TORREVIEJA

*The Church of England worshipping in Word and Sacrament at Lago Jardín, Los Balcones and La Siesta and ministering through the southern Costa Blanca and eastern Murcia.*

*A truly Eucharistic community of faith and love.*

Chaplain (equivalent of Parish Priest):

Father Richard A. Seabrook SSC

+ 34 966 840 136

+ 34 693 932 438 – Chaplaincy Mobile

frras@c-of-e-torrevieja.com

[www.c-of-e-torrevieja.com](http://www.c-of-e-torrevieja.com)



Chaplaincy Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/anglicantorrevieja>

Chaplain's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/chaplaintorrevieja>

Chaplain's Facebook Group (to be used at the moment for livestreaming of liturgies):

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/chaplaintorrevieja/>

### THE CHAPLAIN'S WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2020

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



**WELCOME TO THE CHAPLAINCY OF SS PETER AND PAUL, TORREVIEJA.  
ALL ARE WELCOME TO SHARE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN THIS  
CHAPLAINCY.**

### FINANCIAL GIVING TO THE CHAPLAINCY

There are various ways of giving financially to the Chaplaincy for the work of the Church:

You can give in the plate each week.

You can join our envelope scheme to give a regular amount on a weekly basis – and set aside money for those weeks when you cannot be here.

You are encouraged to set up a standing order to the Chaplaincy – this helps us budget more effectively.

If you are a UK tax payer you can gift aid your giving.

If you are a Spanish tax payer you can have a tax offset by notifying your accountant when arranging your yearly tax along with the Spanish bank account number who will then arrange a claim and the money will be donated back to the Chaplaincy.

One off donations would be gratefully received to assist us at this difficult time.  
Thank you for your help.

For more information contact Father Richard, the Churchwardens, the Treasurer or your Congregational Warden.

### THE PANDEMIC AND THE MONTHS AHEAD

Church services have resumed in accordance with Spanish Law, the advice of the Bishops of the Diocese, the advice of the Spanish Episcopal Conference and FEREDE.

1. Lago Jardín Church will remain closed until further notice. This is because of the difficulty of social distancing in the church and its already limited capacity.
2. There is to be a building project to renovate the church but **Los Balcones church is now closed until April 2021. All services for the Chaplaincy will be held at La Siesta.**
3. La Siesta - these services will be for the whole Chaplaincy so please make every effort to be there and support the liturgical life of the Chaplaincy as we begin again in limited circumstances.

Future celebrations of the Holy Eucharist are:

Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> September	1700
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> September	1130 - HARVEST
Saturday 26 <sup>th</sup> September	1700
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> October	1130
Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup> October	1700
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> October	1130
Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup> October	1700
Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> November	1130
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November	1130 – ALL SOULS DAY
Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup> November	1700 – REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup> November	1130
Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> November	1700

The live-streamed liturgies continue:

1. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/chaplaintorrevieja> and ask to join the group.
2. You will be asked three questions. Please complete them and agree to the rules of the group.
3. When the livestream starts it will appear on your device in the Facebook stream. The stream will start a few minutes before the broadcast so you can get settled in. You can only see this when I start the livestream. You can see and hear me but I cannot see you.

We will very much be adopting a hybrid approach for the foreseeable future.

On the Sundays where there is a Mass at La Siesta, there will be a live-streamed Mass on Saturdays at 1700 so that those unable to come to church will still be able to see Mass celebrated.

On the Saturdays where there is a Mass at La Siesta, there will be a live-streamed Mass on Sundays at 1100 so that those unable to come to church will still be able to see Mass celebrated.

The weekday live-streams will continue. The general pattern is:

Monday	1100	EP	1800
Tuesday	0930	EP	1800
Wednesday	1100	EP and Rosary	1800
Thursday	0930	EP	1800
Friday	no live stream (Father Richard's rest day)		
Saturday	no live stream in the morning, Mass when indicated.		

There will also be a liturgy still included in the weekly sheet for those unable to access the internet. This means there will be "physical" worship, live-streamed worship and "printed" worship.

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### **Church of England Chaplaincy of SS Peter and Paul, Torreveija**

In conjunction with the Diocesan guidelines and the local laws, the following instructions have been agreed by the Chaplaincy Council as the most workable in order to provide an environment that is as safe as possible for those wishing to attend a church service. You are required to comply with these instructions to ensure the safety and protection of everyone.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTENDING CHURCH AT LA SIESTA**

1. Only the main entrance will be used (disabled access) and the door will be secured in an open position from before the time when people gather for the service until after the last worshipper has left. The windows will be open for ventilation and fans will be operating to cool the Church.
2. You will be required to give your name and contact details on arrival as a register has to be kept of attendees. This will be done outside before you enter the church. This measure is only needed to facilitate any contact tracing.
3. Hand sanitizing facilities will be provided at the church entrance for your use prior to, and after, the service.
4. The Churchwardens who will have used the hand sanitizer beforehand will be at the entrance and will direct you to a seat as each area will be specifically marked out in compliance with distance seating regulations. Only family members may sit together
5. The use of face masks is compulsory to reduce transfer of respiratory droplets into the environment. You are requested to provide your own mask (a few spare ones will be kept at church) Entrance to the church will not be permitted without a mask.
6. It is your choice if you wear plastic gloves or not. It is our intention that the need to touch anything will be reduced to the bare minimum.
7. Door handles and hand railings will be disinfected on a regular basis.
8. There must be no physical contact with another person i.e handshakes, kissing, hugging. You must ensure physical distancing is observed at all times.
9. Members of the congregation are advised to carry tissues and use them to catch coughs and sneezes. All tissues must be taken home for disposal.
11. Congregational singing will not take place as it appears to increase significantly the transmission of potentially infected droplets.
12. As it is not permitted to use any service books, a shortened version of the Order of Service will be emailed to worshippers each week. You are requested to print this off at home and bring it with you and keep it for your own use.
13. Father Richard will be the celebrant of the Eucharist and will proclaim the Liturgy of the Word.
14. There will be no sharing of The Peace
15. Holy Communion will be distributed in one kind with the Host only. Both elements will be consecrated, but the Precious Blood will not be distributed and will be partaken of by the Priest alone. It is a clear principle of Anglican theology that the sacrament of the Eucharist is present and complete in either of the consecrated elements.
16. For the time being, it is preferable that only the presiding minister handles the vessels and administers Holy Communion so no one will be required to act as altar server. Given that it will be in one kind for now, and in most places for not more than 50 persons, it is much easier to control hygiene if this is one person's responsibility.
17. Father Richard, presiding at the Eucharist, will cleanse his hands with an alcohol-based sanitizer, just prior to commencing the liturgy of the Eucharist and will do so again just before the distribution of the Host. Extra measures in terms of hygiene, just prior to the administration of communion to the people will be adhered to, by using alcohol-based sanitiser. At all times, the priest in administering the sacrament must avoid contact with the hands of the communicants.
18. The priest will say 'The Body of Christ' to which everyone will reply **Amen** collectively before approaching the altar. The Churchwardens will direct you to the altar at the appropriate time. *Standing in front of the Priest, place your hands in front of you to receive the Host, using the lower hand remove your mask at the side, consume the Host, and then replace your mask. Only when you have replaced your mask should you go to your place.*
19. At this point return to your seat.
20. The collection baskets will not be passed among the congregation. All collections are to be placed in a basket at the exit. *Please do not leave coins as this adds to the complexity of hygiene.*

21. The Churchwardens will be responsible for the counting and banking of the collection. They will wear plastic gloves and sanitize their hands afterwards. Better still, we would encourage you to consider changing to on-line giving or direct debit.
22. The Churchwardens will be responsible for maintaining the ordered entry, seating, movement for communion, and exit. Please wait until a Churchwarden instructs you to leave the Church. If the church is filled to permitted capacity, no further entry is possible.
23. Father Richard, wearing a face mask, will stand at the exit after the Eucharist to greet you keeping a two metre distance, but will not shake hands.
24. There will not be any refreshments provided after the service and you should avoid gathering outside the exit. It will be at your own risk if you go to a local bar for coffee afterwards. We are only responsible for maintaining safety within the church building itself.
25. An appointed team will be responsible for the cleaning of the church after the service in compliance with the Government and Diocesan guidelines
26. Father Richard is taking responsibility for the cleaning of the vessels and the altar linen.
27. The toilet will be available. Paper towels and hand sanitizer will be provided.

**Please bear in mind your own self-care, your level of vulnerability and your age according to the risks involved.**

**If you have COVID-19 symptoms please stay at home.**

Please would you make your own arrangements with Sue Maude regarding informing her ([wardenlasiesta@gmail.com](mailto:wardenlasiesta@gmail.com)) when you are coming to church. You need no longer do it each week so, for example, if you are intending to come to all services then tell her that.

#### **Worship for the week ahead:**

Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> Sept	1700	Vigil Mass	<i>La Siesta</i>
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> Sept	1100	Holy Eucharist	<i>Live-streamed</i>
	1800	Evening Prayer	<i>Live-streamed</i>
Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> Sept	1100	Holy Eucharist	<i>Live-streamed</i>
	1800	Evening Prayer	<i>Live-streamed</i>
Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> Sept	0930	Holy Eucharist	<i>Live-streamed</i>
	1800	Evening Prayer	<i>Live-streamed</i>
Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup> Sept	1100	Holy Eucharist	<i>Live-streamed</i>
	1800	Evening Prayer and Holy Rosary	<i>Live-streamed</i>
Thursday 17 <sup>th</sup> Sept	0930	Holy Eucharist	<i>Live-streamed</i>
	1800	Evening Prayer	<i>Live-streamed</i>
Saturday 19 <sup>th</sup> Sept	1700	Vigil Mass	<i>Live-streamed</i>
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> Sept	1130	Holy Eucharist	<i>La Siesta</i>
	1800	Evening Prayer	<i>Live-streamed</i>

For Evening Prayer, if you wish to join in the common texts they are follows:

Angelus – see later in the newsletter

Introduction - + O God, come to our aid.

**O Lord, make haste to help us.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.**

**As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.**

**Amen. Alleluia!**

Magnificat: + **My soul glorifies the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.  
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;  
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.**

**The Almighty works marvels for me.**

**Holy his name!**

**His mercy is from age to age,  
on those who fear him.**

**He puts forth his arm in strength  
and scatters the proud-hearted.  
He casts the mighty from their thrones  
and raises the lowly.**

**He fills the starving with good things,  
sends the rich away empty.**

**He protects Israel, his servant,  
remembering his mercy,  
the mercy promised to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his sons for ever.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.**

*"Participants in a streamed service of Holy Communion should not be encouraged to place bread and wine before their screens. Joining together to share in the one bread and the one cup as those physically present to one another is integral to the service of Holy Communion; ... and it is not helpful to suggest otherwise. Any idea of the 'remote consecration' of the bread and wine should be avoided."*

The words above are an extract from a letter from Bishop Robert and Bishop David from 2nd April. Under Church of England formularies the Priest himself must set the bread and wine upon the Altar which is going to be consecrated during the Eucharist.

This post underlines The Church of England position.



### **The Blessed Sacrament Lamp at Lago Jardín**

Because Lago Jardín is not going to be used for the foreseeable future (until social distancing rules change) the Blessed Sacrament has been removed from Lago Jardín to be kept safely at the Chaplaincy House.

If you would like a Mass intention, please contact Father Richard.

### **The Chaplain's Prayer List for September 2020:**

*Please pray for the sick and those in particular need at this time:*

Denise Taylor, Dorothy Hanson, Eileen Catlin, Father Helge, Solveig Pettersson, Gwen Simmons, Gerry Hopkins, Benjamin Saville, Colin, for all those suffering in mind, body and spirit as a result of the coronavirus.

### **Please pray for the recently departed:**

*For all those who have died as a result of the coronavirus.*

Year's mind: Millicent Sharpe RIP (10<sup>th</sup> September)

+ Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.

### **Please advise Father Richard if there are any corrections to the above list.**

*If you wish a name to be added to the list of the sick you need to email Father Richard or write to him giving permission for yourself or ensure permission has been granted by someone else for their name to appear on this list. (GDPR regulations).*

*Please pray for the Anglican Church in Perú, for Bishop Jorge Aguilar, and the Bishops, Priests, Deacons and Laity there.*

**Father Richard's Study Group...** will resume when we can.

### **From the Churchwardens:**

It has been so good to see so many of our congregations returning to Church and we thank the dedicated team who prepare for worship and deep clean afterwards. We must also thank those who have been putting their giving away and have now brought it back to Church. This is really needed as is the continued giving to maintain the life of our Chaplaincy. The ideal for the Chaplaincy would be for people to set up standing orders or direct debits. This allows us to have a good idea of what we can expect to receive and plan our finances.

If you feel you can manage to set up a standing order. The bank details to do this are as follows:

**Spanish Bank details.** Banco Sabadell. IBAN number ES65 0081 2061 7900 0106 0414 /BSAB ESBB

**UK Bank details.** Barclays Bank PLC Account name: Diocese in Europe Fund

Account number: 40317039 Sort code: 20-06-13. Please state TORREVIEJA as the reference so the money is correctly applied.

Meeting with people again we hear many differing attitudes. Please remember whether you like the Church building is insignificant. The Altar inside is all that is important. Remember God expects us to love one another. The Priest is a human being sent by God to lead us in worship. He is human like us, who has feelings like us and deserves the blessings of us all. Imagine the Chaplaincy without a leader, not able to receive the Eucharist, where would we be? Remember God is with us all the time and expects us to live the life he has laid out for us.

Thank you so very much for your help,

*Peter and Jennifer*

Elizabeth Kaldor's lemon curd and marmalade is still available. Please contact her on 966721947 or [elizabethkaldor@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethkaldor@gmail.com).

**Making a Spiritual Communion. Something recommended for us all each day when we cannot participate in the Holy Eucharist.**

Even if we are watching a livestreamed Mass (and the times of our Chaplaincy livestreamed celebrations of the Eucharist are listed in the newsletter) we are invited to pause when the Priest receives Holy Communion and make our own spiritual communion. We can say it silently to ourselves or speak it out loud. In this way we are joined with Our Lord in his suffering and death for the world and we are united to His Most Sacred Heart. In these most worrying of days we know Our Lord is there and we can join ourselves to him just as he joins himself with us. This is a great blessing, comfort and strength.

Choose one of these prayers:

*My Jesus,*

*I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.*

*I love You above all things,*

*and I desire to receive You into my soul.*

*Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,*

*come at least spiritually into my heart.*

*As though you have already come, I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.*

*Never permit me to be separated from You.*

*Amen.*

or,

*Lord Jesus Christ, you are the bread of life and the one true vine. I believe that you are truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. I seek you. I worship and adore you. Since I cannot receive you in the eucharistic bread and wine, I pray that you will come into my heart and soul, that I may be united to you, by your all-powerful and ever-present Holy Spirit. Let me receive you, and be nourished by you. Become for me the manna in my wilderness, the bread of angels for my very human journey through time, a foretaste of the heavenly banquet, and solace in the hour of my death. I pray all this, trusting that you yourself are our Life, our Peace, and our everlasting Joy. Amen.*

#### Prayer resources

1. Look at the pages of the Church Union, a well-established organisation in the Church of England: <https://www.churchunion.co.uk/news.php>
2. You are invited to say the *Angelus* at 0600 (!), or better still 1200 and 1800. The services of livestreamed Evening Prayer begin with this.
3. Lastly, and most importantly, make a Spiritual Communion. There is more about this in this newsletter.
4. *Praying at home with the Blessed Virgin Mary*  
The Society of Mary has produced a booklet of readings, reflections and prayers that focus on some of the themes that are important at these times; and how Mary is an example for us, as well as someone who prays with us and for us.  
[https://www.churchunion.co.uk/uploads/SoM\\_May\\_2020\\_Marian\\_Devotional\\_Booklet.pdf](https://www.churchunion.co.uk/uploads/SoM_May_2020_Marian_Devotional_Booklet.pdf)
5. Devotions and Prayers to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.  
[https://www.sswsh.com/uploads/Sacred\\_Heart\\_of\\_Jesus\\_Devotions\\_and\\_Prayers.pdf](https://www.sswsh.com/uploads/Sacred_Heart_of_Jesus_Devotions_and_Prayers.pdf)
6. Praying in Church.  
[https://www.churchunion.co.uk/uploads/Praying\\_in\\_Church\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.churchunion.co.uk/uploads/Praying_in_Church_FINAL.pdf)
7. Praying with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.  
[https://www.churchunion.co.uk/uploads/Blessed\\_Sacrament\\_Resource\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.churchunion.co.uk/uploads/Blessed_Sacrament_Resource_FINAL.pdf)
8. *Saints of the month - SEPTEMBER*  
Although we are praying and worshipping in our homes, we never pray alone. We pray with the Church around the world and our prayers are joined with those of the company of heaven. In this booklet there are a selection of biographies of saints and holy people whose feast days occur this month, as well as prayers you might find helpful.  
[https://www.churchunion.co.uk/uploads/Saints\\_of\\_the\\_Month\\_-\\_September\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.churchunion.co.uk/uploads/Saints_of_the_Month_-_September_FINAL.pdf)

#### **Father Richard writes:**

It was lovely to see an increase in numbers last Sunday at La Siesta as more people return to church. I know some do not feel ready yet but we all look forward to you being back with us as soon as possible. All the hygiene and safety regulations are carried out correctly and for the best reasons of keeping everyone safe. Thank you for your co-operation.

As the celebrating Priest, I wash my hands and sanitise them in the bathroom before Mass. I then further sanitise them at the preparation of the Altar. I sanitise them again before the distribution of Holy Communion. So, by the time you receive the Blessed Sacrament, I will have used regulation hand sanitiser gel three times having also washed my hands thoroughly. I place a mask on my face before distributing the Sacred Host.

Someone has asked why I am not wearing a mask? At all times I am two metres from people when I am at the altar and you will see that the front rows are not used. I wear my mask at all other times in church – when setting up and when putting my things away, when arriving at church, leaving the church and greeting people afterwards. If you have any questions, please ask me.

Let's all continue to pray for each other in love and charity. Let us ask the Lord for his guidance. Be assured that your prayers are joined with the saints, especially Our Lady, the Holy Mother of God and our patrons, Ss Peter and Paul.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

Your priest and friend,            Father Richard

### **DATES AHEAD**

Our postponed Election of Churchwardens and Annual Chaplaincy Meeting will now take place at La Siesta on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September beginning with the 1700 celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Because we cannot distribute papers these will be emailed to you in advance of the meeting. The meeting is open to anyone on the Electoral Roll. **Please let Sue Maude know if you are coming ([wardenlasiesta@hotmail.com](mailto:wardenlasiesta@hotmail.com)).**

### **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September      HARVEST FESTIVAL**

This year, because of the Pandemic, you are invited not to bring food gifts but monetary gifts for a special collection, half to be given to Reach Out and the other half to Alimentos Solidarios. There is a great need at the moment and the monetary gifts can be applied to whatever these two excellent, local organisations believe is best in feeding the hungry in this area.

### **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

#### **Entrance Antiphon**

**Cf. Sir 36: 18**

Give peace, O Lord, to those who wait for you,  
that your prophets be found true.  
Hear the prayers of your servant,  
and of your people Israel.

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#### **Collect**

Look upon us, O God,  
Creator and ruler of all things,  
and, that we may feel the working of your mercy,  
grant that we may serve you with all our heart.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

## First reading

**Ecclesiasticus 27:33-28:9**

### **Forgive your neighbour the hurt he does you; and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven**

Resentment and anger, these are foul things,  
and both are found with the sinner.  
He who exacts vengeance will experience the vengeance of the Lord,  
who keeps strict account of sin.  
Forgive your neighbour the hurt he does you,  
and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven.  
If a man nurses anger against another,  
can he then demand compassion from the Lord?  
Showing no pity for a man like himself,  
can he then plead for his own sins?  
Mere creature of flesh, he cherishes resentment;  
who will forgive him his sins?  
Remember the last things, and stop hating,  
remember dissolution and death, and live by the commandments.  
Remember the commandments, and do not bear your neighbour ill-will;  
remember the covenant of the Most High, and overlook the offence.

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## Responsorial Psalm

**Psalm 102(103):1-4,9-12**

*The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy.*

My soul, give thanks to the Lord  
all my being, bless his holy name.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord  
and never forget all his blessings.

*The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy.*

It is he who forgives all your guilt,  
who heals every one of your ills,  
who redeems your life from the grave,  
who crowns you with love and compassion.

*The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy.*

His wrath will come to an end;  
he will not be angry for ever.  
He does not treat us according to our sins  
nor repay us according to our faults.

*The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy.*

For as the heavens are high above the earth  
so strong is his love for those who fear him.  
As far as the east is from the west  
so far does he remove our sins.

*The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy.*

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## **Second reading**

**Romans 14:7-9**

### **Alive or dead, we belong to the Lord**

The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord. This explains why Christ both died and came to life: it was so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

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## **Gospel Acclamation**

**Jn13:34**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
I give you a new commandment:  
love one another just as I have loved you,  
says the Lord.  
Alleluia!

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## **Gospel**

**Matthew 18:21-35**

### **To be forgiven, you must forgive**

Peter went up to Jesus and said, 'Lord, how often must I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? As often as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times.'

'And so the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When the reckoning began, they brought him a man who owed ten thousand talents; but he had no means of paying, so his master gave orders that he should be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, to meet the debt. At this, the servant threw himself down at his master's feet. "Give me time" he said "and I will pay the whole sum." And the servant's master felt so sorry for him that he let him go and cancelled the debt. Now as this servant went out, he happened to meet a fellow servant who owed him one hundred denarii; and he seized him by the throat and began to throttle him. "Pay what you owe me" he said. His fellow servant fell at his feet and implored him, saying, "Give me time and I will pay you." But the other would not agree; on the contrary, he had him thrown into prison till he should pay the debt. His fellow servants were deeply distressed when they saw what had happened, and they went to their master and reported the whole affair to him. Then the master sent for him. "You wicked servant," he said "I cancelled all that debt of yours when you appealed to me. Were you not bound, then, to have pity on your fellow servant just as I had pity on you?" And in his anger the master handed him over to the torturers till he should pay all his debt. And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart.'

## Homily

Hatred and resentment are moral cancers that eat away at our enthusiasm to do good. An appeal to strict justice is not enough to solve the dilemma, since taking out another's eye does not really cure the loss of one's own eye, and revenge cannot really settle the account of a grievance. But forgiveness is a hard virtue to gain and to maintain. We can feel the problem in the question Peter asks of Jesus today: "How many times must I forgive?" And although his proposal of "seven times" is used as a round symbolic willingness to forgive "as much as it is humanly possible to forgive," Jesus suggest we must go further still, since God forgives "seventy seven times" (or seventy times seven times.) Forgiveness is not a question of just how often or how many times, rather it reflects God's unending willingness to pardon. There are no limits to his forgiveness.

It is so easy to forget God's goodness, as our first reading illustrates today. (Eccl 27:30-28:7) Even the stark reality of our own death does not keep each of us alert to God's gracious promise of salvation as the guiding principal of our actions. It is not easy to see the goodness of God in the hurt we inflict on each other in our selfish interactions. Paul tells us today that we do influence each other. We affect each other. But is it for the good (Rom 14:7-9.)

Our parable today shows that we are incapable of forgiving without first appreciating the forgiveness we have received from God. Notice the three scenes:

(1) We are insolvent, indebted, overdrawn in our account with God's goodness. God has given us freely life, freedom, integrity and hope. We are incapable of achieving anything by our own resources- we have none! "Without me you can do nothing."

(2) We are puffed-up with our own importance: "Pay me what you owe me!" We can be intolerant, demanding, inexcusable and arrogant. We can be unkind and unforgiving. We can injure our neighbour, and he can hurt us. We can elbow our way roughly through life. We can so easily hold a grudge, and refuse to forgive.

(3) The ultimate reality "God's goodness" is never simple-minded. God is not blind. The unforgiving cannot be forgiven. Forgiveness only comes from realising that we have been forgiven. In pardoning we are pardoned. Our tenuous hold on others must quickly be consumed not by following our hatred to the hilt, but by pardoning in gentle forgiveness. Only so can we realise the equation: Insolvency cannot make demands!

And so let us forgive from our hearts, for if we leave the court with our own suit dismissed, and fail to forgive, then we find ourselves immediately rearranged and in the dock as the guilty accused!

## The Nicene ("Niceno-Constantinopolitan") Creed

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.  
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God,  
Light from Light,

true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

*At the words that follow, up to and including 'and became man', all bow.*

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## **THE GENERAL INTERCESSIONS**

The Lord is compassion and love, so we present our prayers with confidence:

1. For forgiveness among Christians, that we may treat each other as God treats us (*pause to reflect and pray*). Lord, hear us.
2. For an end to vengence and hatred, that all people may learn to live together in tolerance (*pause to reflect and pray*). Lord, hear us.
3. For the homeless men, women and children on our streets, that they may be looked after (*pause to reflect and pray*). Lord, hear us.
4. For all who suffer because of natural disasters, that they may be helped (*pause to reflect and pray*). Lord, hear us.
5. For those who beg God for a good harvest, that their prayers may be heard (*pause to reflect and pray*). Lord, hear us.
6. For all who suffer from Covid 19 and other illness at this time, that they may receive the treatment they need. (*pause to reflect and pray*). Lord, hear us.
7. For our friends who have died (N & N) that they may share in the eternal redemption won by Christ (*pause to reflect and pray*). Lord, hear us.

**Conclusion** (*by the Presider*) God of mercy and compassion, you heal every one of our ills:  
help us, we pray you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Hymn:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDF6aEpciVY&list=RDvDF6aEpciVY&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDF6aEpciVY&list=RDvDF6aEpciVY&start_radio=1)

## The Angelus



The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary,  
And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee,  
Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy  
womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners  
now  
and at the hour of our death.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.  
Be it unto me according to Thy Word.

Hail Mary, (as above)

And the Word was made flesh,  
And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, (as above)

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.  
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts; that as we have known the incarnation  
of thy son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by His + cross and passion we may be brought  
to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**