



# Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)  
August 25, 2019

## Remembering One's Roots

By Mary Katharine Deeley

Several years ago, a mother dropped her son off at the university's Catholic Center with the words, "Remember where you come from." I recall thinking how profound those words were. They spoke not only of a place but also of an experience of family. She was reminding him of his roots.

In the first years of college, students can easily lose their way. They experiment with different behaviors and identities. They strive to figure out how to manage their responsibilities. Their religious practice may lapse or change.

With a strong foundation, however, most will settle down to the business of becoming Catholic and Christian adults, which happens in small and large steps.

The people in Sunday's parable had changed so much that the master didn't even recognize them: "I do not know where you are from." Maybe they had forgotten themselves or had rejected the promises that the master (who is God) had given them. In any case, Jesus gives them a glimpse of what's behind the narrow gate of salvation—as well as the alternative—and urges them to "strive to enter" it. Our baptism is a personal invitation to this narrow gate. The path of discipleship requires God's grace and a desire to serve. If our lives don't reflect this call, we run the risk of forgetting who we are, where we are from, and what we are promised. Reflect today on your identity as a child of God and hear God say to your heart, "Remember where you come from." +

## Sunday Readings

### Isaiah 66:18–21

[Thus says the LORD,] "I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; they shall come and see my glory."

### Hebrews 12:5–7, 11–13

Do not disdain the discipline of the Lord or lose heart when reproved by him; for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines.

### Luke 13:22–30

[Jesus said,] "Strive to enter through the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough."

*Our baptism  
is a personal invitation  
to enter God's  
narrow gate.*

## A Word from Pope Francis

In the Old Testament, the requirement to be holy, in the image of God who is holy, included the duty to care for the most vulnerable people, such as the stranger, the orphan, and the widow. Jesus brings this Covenant law to fulfillment; he who unites...divinity and humanity, a single mystery of love.

—Angelus, October 26, 2014



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I follow my baptismal call to serve God and my neighbor?
- Do I take time to remember from where I came—from God?

# Three Keys to Forgiveness

By Fr. Paul Boudreau

Forgiveness is hard. The pain of a broken heart, abuse, or betrayal hangs on. Each day we recall that someone we cared about did us wrong. We're supposed to forgive, but where do we start? How can I forgive somebody who cut me so deeply that, years later, I still feel the pain as if it happened yesterday?



## Key No. 1: Pray

Janet came to me with a problem. Monica, a coworker, was saying terrible things about her to other coworkers. Every workday, Janet would see Monica and know that she was saying nasty things. Janet wasn't in a position to talk to her boss about this, and Monica wouldn't give her the time of day. She felt helpless and didn't know what to do.

So I suggested that Janet give Monica a blessing whenever she saw her or recalled her cruelties. I said, "Just whisper to yourself: 'God, bless Monica.' It's as easy as saying, 'God, damn Monica.' Just change one word!"

It made a big difference. Janet began saying that simple prayer dozens of times daily, and things started to improve. Gradually Monica lost interest in putting her down.

What happened is that prayer began to heal Janet's own heart. The more she

blessed her tormentor, the more she was able to really mean it. Not only did it heal her heart, it began to heal the distance between her and Monica.

## Key No. 2: Be Forgiven

If you really want to forgive, start by being forgiven. A quick run to church for the sacrament

of reconciliation does wonders for the soul. It doesn't have to be much: "Father, I'm carrying bitterness toward someone. I need to be forgiven."

When we consider all that God has forgiven in our lives, it adds up. The deeper we search into the darkness of our own sins, the deeper goes the forgiveness. I look at my history and realize I've been forgiven so much. This ocean of forgiveness in me begins to overflow into the lives of others who need my forgiveness.

Forgiveness, like the Sunday liturgy, is an experience in which we are called to participate fully and actively. When asking for forgiveness becomes a living reality in my life, something that's happening to me continually, I'm on my way to experiencing the healing that forgiving others can bring.

## Key No. 3: Profess Forgiveness

Miguel's father was abusive. Growing up, Miguel endured daily onslaughts of

ridicule and humiliation. Once he was older and free from his father, he still carried a load of hurt. His father's words were never far from his thoughts.

Miguel's wife, Lucy, told him that he had to forgive his father. She gave Miguel a pad of sticky notes. On each note she wrote, "I forgive you," and stuck them throughout their house. Miguel took some to work and put them up in his work area.

A thousand times a day, prompted by Lucy's notes, Miguel said, "I forgive you." Over many months, Miguel's harsh feelings for his father began to subside. He never said it directly to his father; the man would not have received it. But Miguel's daily expressions of forgiveness progressed from pretense to reality. In time, he really forgave his father.

It's hard to forgive, but it's harder not to. The toxin of bitterness poisons the heart. Forgiveness heals. From the cross, Jesus forgave his crucifiers. It worked for him. So use these keys and unlock for yourself the healing way of forgiveness. +

  
**PRAYER**

*Lord, you came to offer the gift of salvation to all people. Help me embrace all people with a loving and compassionate heart.*

—From *Faithful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

August 26–31

**Monday, Weekday:** 1 Thes 1:1–5, 8b–10 / Mt 23:13–22

**Tuesday, St. Monica:** 1 Thes 2:1–8 / Mt 23:23–26

**Wednesday, St. Augustine:** 1 Thes 2:9–13 / Mt 23:27–32

**Thursday, Passion of St. John the Baptist:** 1 Thes 3:7–13 / Mk 6:17–29

**Friday, Weekday:** 1 Thes 4:1–8 / Mt 25:1–13

**Saturday, Weekday:** 1 Thes 4:9–11 / Mt 25:14–30

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