



FORGIVENESS AND GENTLENESS

Both gentleness and the ability to forgive are not signs of weakness but of strength.

This week's prayers are prepared by Upton Hall FCJ



Monday 14th September



Sunday Gospel: a story about forgiveness (Mt 18: 21-35)

Peter approached Jesus and asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive? As many as seven times?"

Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times. That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount. Since he had no way of paying it back, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his property, in payment of the debt. At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.' Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan.

When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding, 'Pay back what you owe.'

Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

But he refused. Instead, he had the fellow servant put in prison until he paid back the debt.

Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair. His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?' Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt. So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives your brother from your heart."

Monday 15th September



Above all, through God's grace, the whole is marked by the gentleness, the gentle strength, which is 'a quality which helps us to keep a calm spirit, a peaceful heart, and control in our words and gestures, even when the circumstances seem to call forth, or at least justify, an explosion of displeasure or anger. Gentleness results in right relationships with God, self and others. Gentleness keeps our heart always within the boundaries of justice, reason and love.

(Adapted from Mère Josephine Petit fcJ/Mère Marie de Bussy fcJ)



Dear God,

As we start this week in prayer, we ask you to teach us how to be gentle.

Remind us of the many ways you have shown gentleness to us.

When we respond to others, help us to see them how you see them. Show us this week how to stand for what is right without abandoning gentleness and respect.

Teach us to speak the truth in love, but most importantly this week let our gentleness be evident to all as a clear sign that you are at work in our lives. Amen.

Tuesday 15th September



Christians are called to be forgiving people but sometimes the pain we have suffered is so bad that we may not feel able to forgive.

In those times, perhaps we can ask God to help us to want to forgive, or even to help us to want to want to forgive.

Is there anyone you need to forgive?

Loving God, I bring before you today all that is in my heart.

If there is anyone I need to seek forgiveness from,
please give me the courage and humility to say 'I'm sorry'.

If there is anyone I need to forgive, please give me the courage to do so,
and in so doing to free both myself and the other person.

And, Merciful God, I say sorry to you for any mistakes I have made.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Tuesday 15th September



Barry Mizen on forgiveness (1 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1dLbUhbazM>

The Forgiveness project

16-year-old Jimmy Mizen was murdered in May 2008 when he and his older brother went into a bakery near their home in Lee, south east London. While inside, Jake – who had been cautioned by police several years earlier for harassing Jimmy’s older sibling – brushed past the brothers. A scuffle followed resulting in Jake hurling a glass dish at Jimmy and fatally wounding him. Jimmy’s parents, Barry and Margaret Mizen, hit national headlines when immediately after the attack they spoke of compassion rather than revenge. In March 2009 Jake received a life sentence for murder.

Loving God,

Bless us with the power of forgiveness. Give us the grace to forgive those who have wronged us. Give us the strength to let go of ill-will, the strength to forgive our own failings, knowing that you have already forgiven us.

Free us from all anger, bitterness and hate. Amen.



Wednesday 16th September

Matthew West: Forgiveness (4:25 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1Lu5udXEZI>



The song was inspired by the true story of Renee Napier, who chose to forgive Eric Smallridge, a drunk driver who took the life of her 20-year-old daughter. As West explained to, "the story made me take a look at my own life and ask myself if I'd be able to do the impossible, just like she did."

Wednesday 16th September



Sow the seeds of gentleness in everything you do, following in Jesus' footsteps who is gentle and humble of heart (Matt 11:29).



Loving and gentle God,

Help us to be gentle

In our love,

In our patience,

In our suffering,

In our thoughts,

In our conversations,

And in our actions with others.

We pray this through Jesus Christ. Amen.



Thursday 17th September



A reading from Paul's letter to the Colossians (Col 3: 14-17)

God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So you should always clothe yourselves with mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other, and forgive each other. If someone does wrong to you, forgive that person because the Lord forgave you. Even more than all this, clothe yourself in love. Love is what holds you all together in perfect unity.



Dear Jesus,

Teach us to be like You in all our ways. Teach us kindness, gentleness, generosity, and to be giving, forgiving, loving and caring. Teach us to follow in Your humble footsteps. Guide us to the place You want us to be. Amen.

Thursday 17th September



Loving God, Creator of our common home,

You fill the earth and sea and sky with life.

Forgive us our neglect of your creation, for the waste and pollution we create, for our carelessness and our indifference to future generations.

Help us to change our ways: to refuse more plastic if we can't reuse it, to lift our voice for lasting change and to live well and gently on the earth.

Amen.

September is 'Creation' month.

Friday 18th September

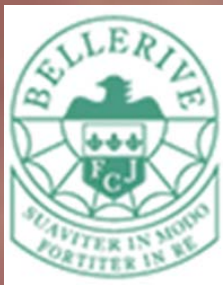
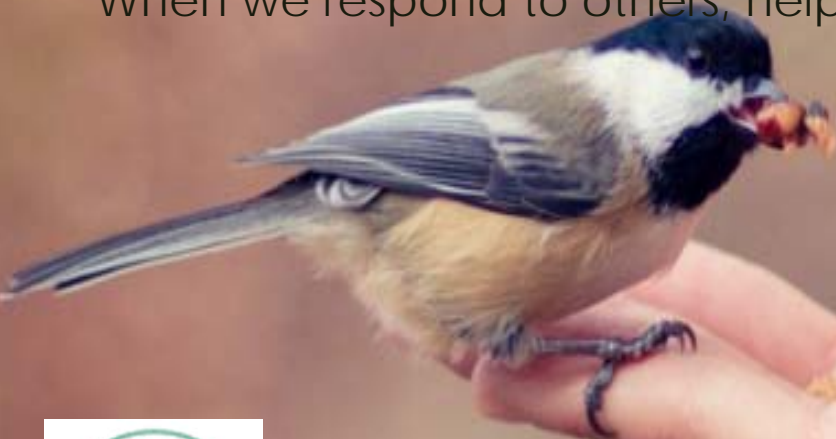


Dear Lord,

Teach us to be gentle. Remind us of the many ways you have shown gentleness to us.

When we respond to others, help us see how you love each one of us.

Help us never to mock or hurt others. Show us how to stand for what is right without abandoning gentleness and respect. Teach us to speak the truth in love. Let our gentleness be evident, a clear sign that you are at work in our lives. Amen.



FCJ Fact: Bellerive's school motto is: 'Suaviter in modo fortiter in re', which means 'gentle in manner, strong in action'.



WORD OF THE WEEK

equi – meaning equal



Friday 18th September: equidistant

equi – meaning equal

equidistant

- adj. at equal distances

The line joins together all points which are equidistant from the two axes.

Other words which derive from the same root meaning are:

- equilateral
- equilibrium
- equinox
- equitable

Look out for more when you are reading next week.

Friday 18th September



Place before God all your cares and concerns and let God's presence bring healing.

From the Faithfulness of God.

Examen

This week, have there been times when you have given or received forgiveness?

What are you grateful for this week? Take a moment to thank God for it.

What has been challenging? Ask God to help you with this.

As you look ahead to the weekend, what would you like to ask of God?