



The Debt We Have in Common

THOMAS M. SANTA, CSsR

As we hear today's Gospel of the servant whose enormous debt is forgiven, yet who refuses mercy to a fellow servant owing far less, we cannot help but ask: how can this be? This is the first question that comes to mind. How could a person be forgiven so much and then, just a few minutes later, refuse to forgive something inconsequential in comparison? Selfishness doesn't really explain it. Being so full of oneself doesn't explain it. Being completely dense and obtuse is perhaps closer to the truth, but even that explanation comes up short.

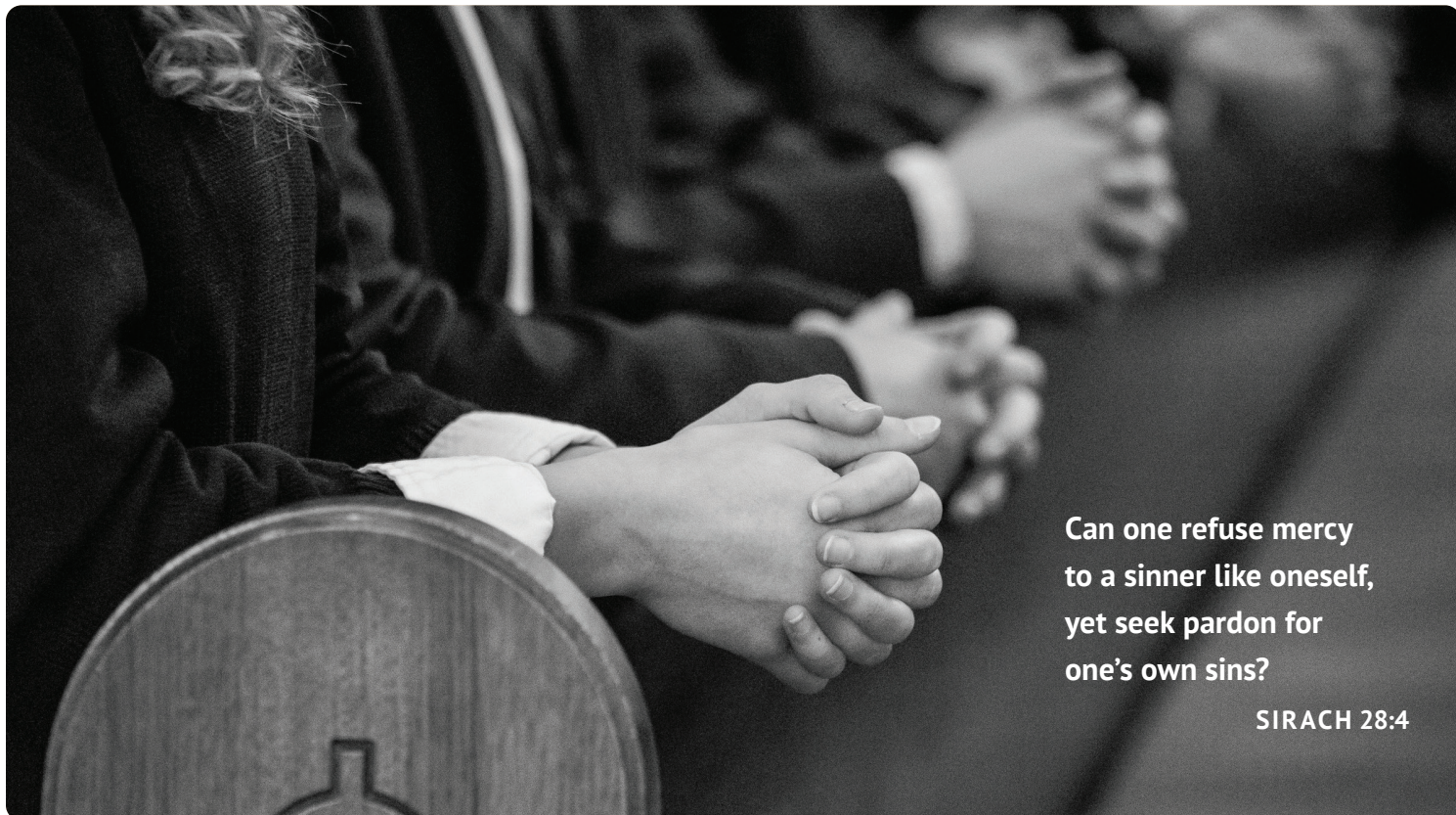
The truth is that the exaggeration of the debt is secondary to the story. What is essential to the story is the invitation to reflect on what it means to be a human being. It is to acknowledge that, when all is said and done, everyone owes a huge debt. No one is exempt from gratitude. An honest acceptance of who we are—completely and totally dependent on God who created us—is the core truth. To be so disconnected from this truth as to not recognize one's own dependence and be completely unaware of the need to be grateful—that is the real challenge the story considers. ●



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Reflect

How am I at forgiveness—with others and with myself?



Can one refuse mercy
to a sinner like oneself,
yet seek pardon for
one's own sins?

SIRACH 28:4

Dear Padre,

If Catholics say the Confiteor at Mass, then why do we still need to go to confession?

Recall when Jesus told Simon and his fishing companions to lower their nets after they had caught nothing. (See Luke 5:1–11.) When their boats began to sink with so many fish, Simon fell at Jesus’ feet and said, “Leave me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” Likewise, at Mass, we’re so filled with awe upon entering the presence of God that we become aware of our own sinfulness.

The penitential act prepares the assembly to enter the celebration in a proper spirit of humility. The priest and the faithful observe a period of silence to acknowledge their sinfulness and confess their awe of Christ’s love and mercy. This is expressed in different forms, one of which is the Confiteor, a general confession that invokes the support of the communion of saints and the specific community gathered at Mass. It includes the instruction to strike one’s breast, an ancient gesture of humility and penitence. (See Luke 18:13; 23:48.) The rite concludes with the priest’s absolution, but it “lacks the efficacy of the sacrament of penance” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 51). Thus, the penitential act isn’t a substitute for absolution from sins confessed in the sacrament of penance, particularly serious, mortal sins. Rather, it prepares the faithful as a unified community to properly listen to God’s word and celebrate the Eucharist worthily (*GIRM* 46). ●

Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR / DearPadre.org



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A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

In the Church there is...a place for everyone, and... every Christian is called to proclaim the gospel and bear witness in every environment.... Thus,



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this people shows its catholicity, welcoming the wealth and resources of different cultures and, at the same time, offering them the newness of the gospel to purify them and to raise them up.

**GENERAL AUDIENCE,
ROME, MARCH 11, 2026**

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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