

**Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time - A '2020**  
**Sir.27:30-28.7///Romans 14.7-9///Matt.18.21-35**

→Ludwig van Beethoven composed a magnificent Concert Mass in honor of his dear friend the financial patron the Archduke Rudolph of Austria...

→it is considered to be one of the great composer's finest works....*PAUSE*

→Beethoven worked on the piece for several years completing it in 1823....and he wanted every note, every word to be perfect...in the hope....as he wrote to the Archduke.... "that the music would inspire religious feelings in those who perform it and those who hear it."

→when the score was, at last completed....Beethoven scribbled a personal wish at the top of the manuscript...

→he wrote "*written from the heart --- so that it may go to the heart.*"

→a touching final sentiment

...that something beautiful might pass **from** the heart to be received **in** the heart....

→and indeed, when we say that a musician is playing a piece of music "*by heart*" we often mean that they are fully caught up in the passion and meaning of the music

→in fact they are probably playing or singing with their eyes closed and soul exposed....more attuned to the musical meaning rather than to the musical notes.

→likewise....when someone recites a poem "*by heart*"....is usually means that the poem, and its meaning is coming directly from the inner places of their soul....

→and finally when we say someone "*is speaking from the heart*"...what we actually mean is that their words are coming from the core of their inner being....

→and given a choice...most of us will usually place a greater value on communicating one's feeling, one's emotions...**when they come from the heart**

→well today...Jesus calls us to some important and difficult words that come from the heart.....[as well]

→the work of forgiving those who sin against us...who hurt us...who offend us....usually has **to come** from our heart....our soul....our inner being...if we are to be sincere and genuine about our forgiveness

*PAUSE*

→today's lesson continues the words of Jesus from last week about the spirit of reconciliation and how that happens

→and once again Simon Peter asks Jesus a very logical and straightforward question.... "*how many times do I have to forgive someone when they sin against me....*"

→it's a question that I am sure many of us have thought about at some time or another.

→and before Jesus can reply.... Peter offers a response he thought Jesus would agree with..... "*I'm thinking seven times,*" he says

→now....the custom of the times...was that one might forgive someone two...or at most three times for the same offence....so Peter thinks he's going well beyond any possible expectation.

→however as we hear...Jesus responds...by saying ... "not seven times...but seventy times seven..." *PAUSE*

→[now] the point is not the number 490....but that.....as long as you are keeping count then you have not really forgiven at all....

→i.o.w....keeping score and forgiveness can't co-exist...*PAUSE*

→and then, while Peter is trying to wrap his mind around this answer...Jesus follows with a parable to further illustrate his point about the servants and their debts...

→in essence what Jesus is saying is that FORGIVENESS IS NOT A RULE TO BE FOLLOWED.... BUT INSTEAD.... IT IS A LIFE TO BE LEAD....AN ATTITUDE TO BE LIVED.

→[and] the point that J. makes is that FORGIVENESS is a fundamental component...and part of our relationship to God and each other

because when you get right down to it...the "*spirit of forgiveness,*" permeates all aspects of Ctianity

→for us to pray, to truly pray....forgiveness needs to be part of our prayer, because in order to enter into prayer effectively, we need to be free from grudges and anger....because....if not is it truly prayer?

→for us to be healed, and for us to bring about healing to others, we need to free our resentment, our bitterness, our scorn...because .....if not can be we really be healed?

→and for us to truly worship we need to first be reconciled to one another, we need to be open towards one another ....because .....if not, then are we truly worshipping?

PAUSE

→so in the end, as you can see.....forgiveness [reconciliation] is a very real part of what means to be a follower of Christ

---and as Christian people we need to be about reconciliation and forgiveness, healing and understanding

→ so perhaps, the real question we need to ask ourselves today is...is if life I am living truly a forgiving one...have I made forgiveness a part of who I am?

→and if it is...then our challenge is to become even more immersed the spirit of forgiveness...

→**and if it isn't**...then perhaps we need to reflect on why this might be the case and perhaps even moreso...what needs to change **so that** we can be more forgiving.

→simply put...that is our challenge...our call...our responsibility...and the meaning behind the words of Jesus today...*PAUSE*

“ how many times do I have to forgive someone when they sin against me....seven times?”

“no.....not seven times...but seventy times seven...”..or perhaps to put it another way....in the end....*it [really] is all a matter of the heart*