

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Gospel text (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..."

Forgiveness exacts a price, first of all from the person who forgives

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)

(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, when we hear Jesus Christ saying the "not seven times but seventy times seven", we may perceive the depth of forgiveness. What is forgiveness, really? Guilt is a reality, an objective force; it has caused destruction that has to be repaired. For this reason, forgiveness must be more than a matter of ignoring, or merely trying to forget. Guilt must be worked through, healed, and thus overcome.

Forgiveness exacts a price, first of all from the person who forgives. He must overcome within himself the evil done to him; he must burn interiorly and in so doing renew himself. As a result, he also involves the other, the trespasser, in his process of transformation, of inner purification, and both parties, suffering all the way through, and overcoming evil, are made new. God could only overcome the guilt and the suffering of men by personally getting involved, by suffering Himself in His Son, who took upon Himself the load of our sins and has overcome it through His own submission.

—O Lord, help us to overcome our faults: with You we can truly commit our hearts and surrender our own existence.