

APRIL – MERCY AND FORGIVENESS

opens doors, promotes and encourages. If we accept that God's love is unconditional, that the Father's love cannot be bought or sold, then we will become capable of showing boundless love and forgiving others even if they have wronged us. Otherwise, our family life will no longer be a place of understanding, support and encouragement, but rather one of constant tension and mutual criticism.⁵⁶

1. Considering that Jesus forgave his persecutors from the cross, what does God's mercy in the Scriptures teach us about how to forgive our family members?
2. Why is it important to be forgiven by God? Why must we trust in his forgiveness in order to forgive others properly?
3. Do any of us find it hard to forgive? What holds us back from forgiving? Is it resentment based on ill will, unduly looking for faults, an excessive concern for our rights, the inability to forgive ourselves or to accept our own limitations? Or is it something else?

Scripture Reading — Psalm 51:3-6, 11-15

A prayer of penance and longing for God's abundant mercy

Have mercy on me, God, in accord with your merciful love;
in your abundant compassion blot out my transgressions.

Thoroughly wash away my guilt;
and from my sin cleanse me.

For I know my transgressions;
my sin is always before me.

Against you, you alone have I sinned;
I have done what is evil in your eyes

So that you are just in your word,
and without reproach in your judgment.

Turn away your face from my sins;
blot out all my iniquities.

A clean heart create for me, God;
renew within me a steadfast spirit.

Do not drive me from before your face,
nor take from me your holy spirit.

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Restore to me the gladness of your salvation;
uphold me with a willing spirit.
I will teach the wicked your ways,
that sinners may return to you.

Family Project

As a family, go to church for the sacrament of reconciliation. A week later, take a few moments to discuss how the sacrament has helped each of you to be more holy and to fight against temptation and sin.