

Session 3



Forgiveness

① *Opening Prayer* (5 minutes) - Psalm 46

The opening prayer of each session is modelled after the *Liturgy of the Hours*, the collection of Psalms recited daily by priests, religious, and many laity.

Side 1: God is for us a refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in time of distress:
so we shall not fear though the earth should rock,
though the mountains quake to the heart of the sea;
even though its waters rage and foam,
even though the mountains be shaken by its tumult.

Side 2: The LORD of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Side 1: The waters of a river give joy to God's city,
the holy place, the dwelling of the Most High.
God is within, it cannot be shaken;
God will help it at the dawning of the day.
Nations are in tumult, kingdoms are shaken:
he lifts his voice, the earth melts away.

Side 2: The LORD of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Side 1: Come and behold the works of the LORD,
the awesome deeds he has done on the earth.
He puts an end to wars over all the earth;
the bow he breaks, the spear he snaps, the shields he burns with fire:
"Be still and know that I am God,
exalted over nations, exalted over earth!"

Side 2: The LORD of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

2 Video Presentation (25 minutes)

Works quoted and cited:

Schuchts, Bob. (2014). *Be Healed: A Guide to Encountering the Powerful Love of Jesus in Your Life*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press.

Seven Deadly Wounds and Associated Beliefs

Abandonment	"I am all alone; no one cares or understands."
Fear	"I am afraid; if I trust I will be hurt / die."
Powerlessness	"I can't change it; I'm too small / weak."
Hopelessness	"Things will never get better; I want to die."
Confusion	"I don't understand what is happening."
Rejection	"I am not loved, wanted, or desired."
Shame (Tainted)	"I am bad, dirty, shameful, stupid, and worthless." ("Because of what happened to me I am unlovable; I will never recover.")

Mother Teresa. "In Mother Teresa's Own Words: 'I Thirst, I Quench'." blog.franciscanmedia.org/franciscan-spirit/in-mother-teresa-own-words-i-thirst-i-quench.



"If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions." (Matthew 6:14 – 15 NABRE)

"Then Peter approaching asked him, 'Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.'" (Matthew 18:21 – 22 NABRE)

"So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart." (Matthew 18:35 NABRE)

Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34 NABRE)

3 Small Group Discussion (30—60 minutes)

1. How have you seen traumatic experiences *prevent* you or others from growing in holiness and peace? How have you seen traumatic experiences *help* you or others to grow in holiness and peace?

2. Look at the “Seven Deadly Wounds” and associated beliefs on the previous page. Can you relate to any of the “identity lies” that are listed? *Reminder: Share only what you are comfortable sharing.* How might a deeper experience of the love of Jesus bring healing to these wounds?

3. Why is it sometimes difficult to “let yourself be loved” by God? How do you think daily prayer help us to open ourselves to an experience of God’s love for us?

4. Refer back to Dr. Bob Schuchts’ analogy of the “Tree of Knowledge” and the “Tree of Life” on the previous page. What’s the difference between a wound in which lies take root and a wound which can actually help us to grow in maturity?

5. Read the following passages. What do they reveal about the importance of forgiveness?

A. **Colossians 3:12—15** Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful.

B. **Catechism of the Catholic Church 2843** Thus the Lord's words on forgiveness, the love that loves to the end, become a living reality. The parable of the merciless servant, which crowns the Lord's teaching on ecclesial communion, ends with these words: "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." It is there, in fact, "in the depths of the heart," that everything is bound and loosed. It is not in our power not to feel or to forget an offense; but the heart that offers itself to the Holy Spirit turns injury into compassion and purifies the memory in transforming the hurt into intercession.

C. **Teresa of Avila, Way of Perfection, XXXVI, 7** But yet, how the Lord must esteem this love we have for one another! Indeed, Jesus could have put other virtues first and said: forgive us, Lord, because we do a great deal of penance or because we pray much and fast much or because we have left all for you and love you very much. He didn't say forgive us because we would give up our lives for you, or as I say, because of other possible things. But he said only, "forgive us because we forgive."

6. In UNBOUND, Neil Lozano also encourages us to forgive ourselves. "To forgive yourself is simply a declaration that you are in agreement with God, that you will not hold yourself to higher standards than God, and you will not demand of yourself more than he does." Is this sometimes difficult? Why or why not?

7. What advice would you have for someone who is having difficulty forgiving? What encouragement might you give them?

④ Closing Prayer of Discernment (5 minutes)

As a group, spend three to five minutes in silent personal discernment. Ask God to prayerfully guide you in answering this question: **What is God calling me to do this week based on what I've heard today?** Afterward, pray together the Lord's Prayer slowly.

God is calling me to:

I will do this on _____(date) at _____(time)