

Inquiry Session: Forgiveness

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA

Reflect on Your Experience

Every relationship experiences some rough waters. Life is not all smooth sailing. An argument can easily begin if two people hold opposite views on some issue and neither is willing to concede a little or meet the other on common ground.

For Reflection . . .

What steps have you taken to reconcile a broken relationship with someone? When reconciliation with someone has not been possible, how have you achieved inner healing or some measure of peace?

Hear the Good News About Forgiveness

God the Father sent Jesus, his Incarnate Son, into the world in the fullness of time in order that we might be reconciled with God. God shows his almighty power by reconciling us to himself; he alone forgives our sins against him.

Sometimes we find ourselves in such a deep pit of despair, isolated from God and from each other, because of sinfulness. There is always recourse to God's healing love. Our brokenness can be healed. We can be raised up to newness of life in God's Son. The very name *Jesus* means "God saves."

Salvation is ours as a free gift from God. Although we frequently wound ourselves and others by sin, we can always return to God and seek forgiveness and healing. God does not hold our sins against us when we seek the Lord and humbly ask for his mercy.

Read the Word of God

Luke 15:11-32

(The parable of the Prodigal Son)

Matthew 1:21

(God will save his people from their sins.)

John 1:29-34

(Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away sin.)

Respond Through Action

The very first step in healing the brokenness that results from sin is to acknowledge our sinfulness. When we recognize and name our choices, actions, and hurtful behavior as sinful, we not only take responsibility for the wrong and harm we have done, we also can seek recourse to God's loving kindness and mercy.

For Reflection . . .

What keeps us from acknowledging and recognizing our sins? Why is "owning up" to our sins so difficult? How can we become better at identifying our sins?

Witness to the Gospel

SAINT MARIA GORETTI

1890-1902

Maria's father died of malaria when she was young. Her mother, out of necessity, began working in the fields, leaving Maria at home with her younger sister. One day a neighbor named Alessandro made lewd advances toward Maria. She vigorously fought back. He could not make her submit, so he stabbed her. Later, in the hospital, Maria received the Last Rites and, in spite of great suffering, prayed for her attacker, granting him forgiveness. In prison for his crime, Alessandro received a vision of Maria and her forgiveness, which prompted his conversion. Saint Maria Goretti's feast day is celebrated July 6.