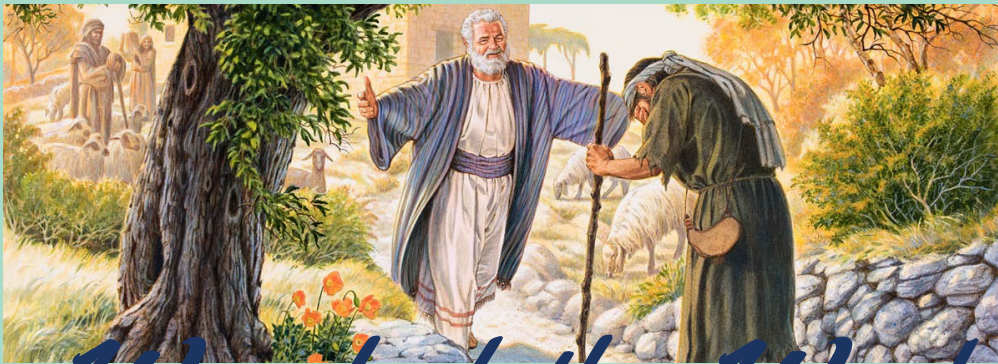


Lent: Forgiveness



If we are honest, we all know there are times when we do or say things which we regret. We realise that we were in the wrong, and we feel ashamed of ourselves.

If we're really sorry then of course we try to put things right or make up for it in some way. We are reminded during Lent that our sin distances us from God but God longs for us to be close to him again, by becoming aware of the effect of our sins.



Word of the Week

Jesus said, 'There was once a man who had two sons. The younger one said to him, "Father, give me my share of the property now." So the man divided his property between his two sons. After a few days the younger son sold his part of the property and left home with the money. He went to a country far away, where he wasted his money on reckless living. He spent everything he had. Then a severe famine spread over that country, and he was left without a thing. So he went to work for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him out to his farm to take care of the pigs. He wished he could fill himself with the bean pods the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything to eat. At last he came to his senses and said, "All my father's hired workers have more than they can eat, and here I am about to starve! I will get up and go to my father and say, "Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called you son; treat me as one of your hired workers.'"

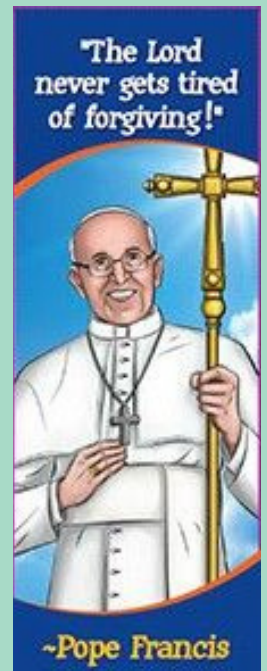
So he got up and started back to his father.

He was still a long way from home when his father saw him; his heart was filled with pity, and he ran, threw his arms around his son, and kissed him. The son said, "Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son." But the father called to his servants. "Hurry! bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Then go and get the prize calf and kill it, and let us celebrate with a feast! For this son of mine was dead, but now he is alive; he was lost, but now he has been found." And so the feasting began.'

Luke 15: 11-32

When have you had to seek forgiveness from someone else?
How did it feel?

Who do we often find it hard to forgive?



Can you think of a person that you need to forgive?

Forgiveness is the greatest gift that we can receive. The whole reason why Jesus came among us as a man, suffered, and died for us on the cross, was to give us the gift of reconciliation with his Father and with our brothers and sisters.

Jesus' goal is for us to be brought into a perfect union with his Father and each other. He wants us all to have that amazing experience of being forgiven- not just for a moment but for all eternity.

Do you need to forgive yourself for something? Are you still feeling shame or guilt for something you have been forgiven for?

Forgiving is not forgetting, what can you learn from the mistakes you have made and been forgiven for? How does this change the way you live your life?

Prayer for the Week

Father, forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. When others have wronged us, may we be ready and willing to put things right, and not make things worse between us. Help us to be kind and tender-hearted, willing to forgive others as readily as you forgive us.

We thank you that you are a loving and forgiving father. May we, in return, be the sort of people you want us to be.

Amen

LET all
that you
DO be DONE
IN LOVE

1 CORINTHIANS 16:14



When Leonardo da Vinci was working on his painting 'The Last Supper', he became angry with a certain man. Losing his temper, he lashed the other fellow with strong words. Returning to his canvas, he attempted to work on the face of Jesus, but was unable to do so. He was so upset, he could not compose himself for this painstaking work. Finally he put down his tools and sought out the man and asked for his forgiveness. The man accepted his apology, and Leonardo was able to return to his workshop and finish painting the face of Jesus.

Forgiveness is the cement that bonds us together;

it is the source of unity;

it is the quality of love;

that draws together out of separation.



Head over to youtube and listen to Matthew West Forgiveness (lyrics HD)