



10. March 2026
LENTEN SPIRITUAL RETREAT
Day 21: “Willingness to Forgive”

After the short series on the transformation of the heart, we return to the readings of the day. This year, we are following the traditional lectionary in our Lenten itinerary. But before getting into the subject, I would like to share with you an intention that is close to my heart. It is a prayer I have written to ask the Lord for the true peace that comes from Him. I would be grateful if many of those who listen to my daily meditations would join us in this simple prayer:

“Beloved Father, we ask You for the peace that flows from Your Heart to touch and transform the hearts of men, so that Your Kingdom may spread throughout the Earth. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.”

From today’s biblical texts, I would like to focus on a brief but very significant passage from the Gospel (Mt 18:15–35). It reads as follows:

“Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.” (vv. 21–22)

Here the Lord alludes to the great miracle of God’s constant willingness to forgive, without which we could not live, much less reach our eternal destiny. In reality, it is unimaginable to what extent our heavenly Father is always ready to forgive the faults of men—and these can take on abysmal dimensions! As the ultimate expression of His willingness to forgive, the Son of God Himself took on death on the Cross to atone for our sins and redeem us.

In the *Message from the Father to Sister Eugenia Ravasio*¹, a little book that I highly recommend reading and meditating on, God allows us to take a deep look into His Heart. It reads as follows:

“Yet My love for these men, My children, never quite ceased. When I realized that neither the patriarchs nor the prophets had been able to make Me known and loved by men, I decided to come Myself. But how could I come among them? There was no other way than to come

¹ https://www.fatherspeaks.net/pdf/the_father_speaks_english_v-2005-02.pdf

Myself, in the second Person of My divinity. Would men know Me? Would they listen to Me? Nothing in the future was hidden from Me; I Myself answered these two questions: "They will ignore My presence, even though they will be near Me. In My Son they will treat Me cruelly, notwithstanding all the good He will do for them. In My Son they will speak ill of Me, they will crucify Me to bring about My death." Shall I stop because of this? No, My love for My children, men, is too great. I did not stop there. Understand well that I loved you, as it were, more than My beloved Son, or rather, more than Myself."

Here we encounter the mystery of God's love for mankind, which is reflected in Jesus' answer to Peter's question. On God's part, it is an unlimited willingness to forgive, which can only be blocked when man closes himself off to His forgiveness and thus condemns himself, so to speak.

We who follow the Lord must awaken to the magnanimity of this love so that this willingness to forgive may also arise in us. Only through divine love is it possible to imitate it! At this point, we can make a connection with what we said earlier about the conversion of the heart.

What can save the world if not God's forgiveness, which must also be reflected in our lives? It is the source of the overflowing mercy that God offers to this world, because He does not want the death of the sinner, but that he convert and be saved (cf. Ezekiel 33:11). Perhaps Peter was surprised by Jesus' response, assuring him that he should forgive his brother whenever he offended him. But these words reveal in a special way the love of the Redeemer, which will later find its highest expression in His death on the Cross for all men. Everyone can come to Him and open their heart to Him, and then a ray of His divine love will illuminate them.

How easy the Lord makes it for us! And yet, how many pass by and do not know the way of His love. Often, man himself puts obstacles in the way of accepting the grace of forgiveness that is offered to him. He does not know how good God is or how far His love reaches. Let us tell him!

What can we take away from today's Gospel?

We must allow ourselves to be purified in the washing of God's forgiveness so that our hearts can more deeply assimilate His love. Certainly, forgiveness can only be effective when the guilty party acknowledges their faults and asks for forgiveness. But just as God is always ready to forgive, so too must we be ready to forgive others. Our hearts must

imitate this attitude. This will be possible when God's love has purified our hearts. In the Our Father, we pray this meaningful phrase every day: *"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."* That is what the Lord wants from us. Then His love can continue to guide us on our way. On the contrary, if we do not forgive or are not willing to do so, we block the love of our Lord, who wants to purify us and fill us so that we can become like Him.

The flower we want to offer today is a heart that is always ready to forgive.

Meditation on the reading of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2022/03/22/>

Meditation on the Gospel of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2023/08/17/>