

from the heart, not just with words. Pray the prayer he taught us - 'forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.'

The Lord be with you.



Prayer Points

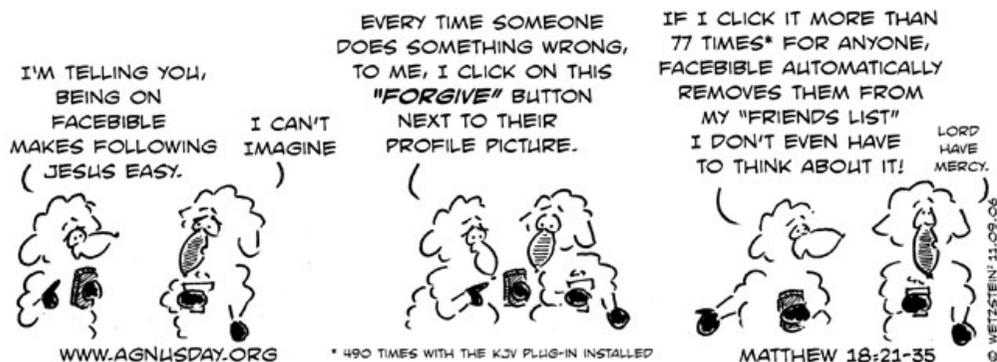
Thanksgiving

- For the love and mercy God extends to us each day

Petitions

- Peter, Summer, Sylvia, Helen, Lorna, Debbie, Kaye, Chris, Rita, Julia & John, Bishop John Stewart, Fr Alan, Fr Tom and their families.
- Those affected by COVID 19,
- For our Federal and State leaders
- For our healthcare professionals (who are working ridiculous hours at the moment.)

The Lighter Side of Life



Anglican Parish of the Otways Newsletter

15th Sunday after Pentecost

13th September, 2020

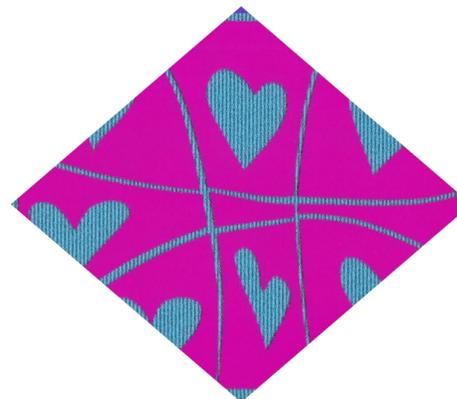
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**Anglican Parish of the
Otways**

Greetings in the name of Jesus.

I trust this week's newsletter finds you well. I think we are all disappointed that restrictions are not being lifted as quickly as we would like, and opening our churches is still some time off, but we can trust that the Lord of all is in fact in control of all and is walking with us through these difficult times. Do continue to pray for our state and national leaders as they face the unenviable task of negotiating us all through these unprecedented times.

I read an interesting article this week reflecting on what it means to be a worshipping church unable to worship together and in particular, not share in communion. It suggested worship was as natural as breathing for all people, the only choice we have is what we worship. It also suggested that what makes anything other than God dangerous to worship is not that it is sinful or evil, but that they are unconscious, the kind of worship you slip into without realising it.

This of course leads us to idolatry with God not being worshipped as he should, if at all. This might all seem a bit challenging but it raises the point that it is so important that we choose to worship God in our homes during this time of isolation. It is so easy to drift from the discipline of regular worship on our own but I encourage you to not let this joyful discipline slip away. Remember, if you are on your own, maybe you would like to ring a friend and worship together over the phone, or elect a fellow Christian to be your nominated bubble visitor and get together for a regular time of worship. And remember, we are not alone, when we worship we join in a spiritual way with every other worshipping Christian and the host of heaven, offering worship worthy of our God.

May the Lord bless you with peace and joy.
Jenny

Prayer of the Week

O God, you call your Church to witness that in Christ we are reconciled to you: help us so to proclaim the good news of your love, that all who hear it may turn to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Reading. Matthew 18.21-35

Reflection

In today's reading Peter asks Jesus how many times one ought to extend forgiveness to another. Peter proposes a reasonable number of times, perhaps seven. Jesus replies by extending Peter's proposal by an enormous amount; not just seven times should one forgive, but 77 times. The parable of the unforgiving servant is Jesus' elaboration of his initial reply to Peter. Through the parable we come to understand the depths of God's mercy toward us and the results of our acceptance of God's forgiveness.

There is a temptation to quantify forgiveness as Peter tried to do, but Jesus' point is that forgiveness is not about quantity—the number of times we extend forgiveness to another. In the parable the king's forgiveness is like God's forgiveness, it transforms us, helping us to be as forgiving as God. The lesson is clear: If we hoard God's mercy while showing no mercy to others, we risk forfeiting the effects of God's mercy in our lives.

When it comes to forgiveness, something we all struggle with at times, we would benefit from a reflection on The Lord's Prayer in which we ask to be forgiven only in so far as we forgive others. Are we happy in praying for this provisional forgiveness? So often we show understanding and sympathy with our own desires, but apply different standards to others. In today's parable we are reminded to look hard at ourselves. Do we extend mercy to others that reflects the mercy we receive ourselves? Mercy is deeper than forgiveness; it sees into the heart of the other and walks around for a while in the others shoes. It includes compassion and active healing. Shakespeare's description still resounds, 'Mercy is twice bless'd - it blesseth him that gives and him that takes.' To live in an environment of mercy is to live in an atmosphere of peace, healing and growth.

As you pray this familiar story - read it twice and see does anything new strike you the second time. A story of Jesus throws light on the person reading it and on the reality he speaks about; in this case, on the call to forgive and on the nature of God's forgiveness. The call is to forgive