

Fr Ryan Homily 7-23-23

Read: Wisdom 12:13, 16-19; Psalm 86; Romas 8:26-27; Matthew 13:24-43

So I don't know if it's because it's summer and everyone's a bit more relaxed and we take things more simply or hopefully because it's just the Lord's inspiration, please God, but just what I have to share this morning is just a really simple word. In fact I've kinda been fearing that it's too simple but every time I've been praying with it over the past couple days trying to move in another direction, talk about something that might be a bit more exciting for everybody I just keep feeling God leading me back to this one point and I wanna be faithful to Him and share it with you so here it is. The Lord is asking you to forgive from your heart. If you're harboring any unforgiveness and He's gonna help you do it if your willing to learn from Him. That's all it is this morning. He's asking you to forgive from your heart. Because our God is nothing if He is not forgiveness, if He's not mercy. The primary movement of God is to offer pardon to a sinner. That's who God is in His heart. Our first reading ended by saying Lord you gave your children good ground for hope that you would permit repentance for their sins, that He would forgive us. And because this is who God is we can't hold onto unforgiveness in our own hearts and then hope to be with Him forever because those two things are incongruous. There is no unforgiveness in Heaven. And so the Lord is now asking you to forgive from your heart and He's gonna help you do it if your willing to learn from Him. And a lot of times where we can start to learn is by going to scripture. And I think the Book of Genesis is one of the greatest pieces of literature ever written along with the gospels themselves there's no rivals. And in our weekday masses over the past couple of weeks we've been slowly working our way through the book of Genesis starting with creation, Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Sodom and Gomorrah, all this stuff. And Genesis is part of the first five books the Bible called the Pentateuch. And the first five books, the Pentateuch, they sort of stand on their own in many ways, there's a structure and a rhythm when you take it as a whole. But they say the same thing is true for the Book of Genesis that it has it's own structure and rhythm so that it to, the Book of Genesis, stands on it's own in many ways. And so we go to the Book of Genesis, how does it begin? Oh with the first man and woman, husband and wife, Adam and Eve they fall away from God, and they start to turn on each other. Right they point fingers at each other and immediately there's division in the family. And it

only gets worse with their two sons. One murders the other, Cain murders Able. And so right from the beginning the family starts to be torn apart. And you have to wonder would things have gone differently at any point if there would've been any mention of forgiveness. Any attempt at reconciliation with God with each other. And that's how Genesis starts, and it just gets worse and worse and worse from there until you get to the last Chapters in the Book of Genesis and it's a story about this man named Joseph. A story I think we're all familiar with, at least on a cursory level. Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery, and they do that because he has been favored by their father Isaac. And so there's a lesson in and of itself, favoritism breeds resentment and these brothers hate Joseph, they sell him, he's in Egypt now. And eventually he rises to prominence and there is a great famine and the people come to him looking for bread. And his brothers travel to Egypt from Israel to ask for assistance for food. They don't know they're standing in front of their brother, but Joseph recognizes them. These people who destroyed his life so many years ago and Joseph reveals himself to them and he forgives them. That's the first real moment of forgiveness anywhere in the Book of Genesis. There's no resentment in Joseph's heart over what his brothers did to him. And eventually their father Jacob dies and his brothers they become worried. They become afraid because they think maybe it was Joseph was just being nice to us to please our dad. And now that he's passed, now that he's dead, he's gonna get vengeance on us. And so they go to Joseph afraid asking him for mercy and you know what he does? Joseph begins to weep because he loves his brothers. He didn't bear any resentment against them. He saw all that happened to him at their hands as province that God was working good through the bad that they had done to him. It's amazing. Joseph is an amazing person. Genesis ends with this remarkable story of forgiveness. It ends with forgiveness. Forgiveness and reconciliation in the family. And it teaches us today that only after forgiveness can there be healing. Within ourselves, within our family, where ever it might be. And sometimes we hear that and we think I don't know if I like that very much. I'm the one who was hurt, I'm the one who was wronged and now I have the responsibility to forgive? Yes you do because we're followers of Jesus. And if we look at the life of Jesus who is sent by His Father, again Father is nothing if He's not forgiveness and mercy. Jesus is sent by Him. And how does the life of Jesus end? He's on the cross and He says Father forgive them they don't know what they're doing. And He pours out His blood to wash us clean from our sins. Jesus

who has been rejected, He has been tortured, we put Him to death, and it ends with forgiveness. And it's all meant to show us what's most important. That our life is supposed to end with forgiveness. Hopefully we've forgiven long before then, but it needs to end there. In our gospel, Jesus tells us a parable to the crowds about the weeds and the wheat growing together in the field. And He shares a couple more parables about the kingdom but when He's finished He dismisses the crowds, He goes with His disciples back into the house and they say to Him hey that first parable you shared about the weeds and the wheat, like we don't get it. We're kinda thick in the head, can you just explain what you were talking about? And so Jesus does point by point. Jesus says it's about the end. It's about what's gonna happen to you at the end where you'll either be like the weeds, you'll be thrown out and burned, or like the wheat where you will shine like the sun in the Father's kingdom. He's saying that there's a dividing line. There's a threshold at the end. And hopefully at the end we have forgiven everyone who's ever hurt us in any way, just like Joseph, just like Jesus. Hopefully your life ends with complete, total forgiveness and you've asked God to forgive you and you repented of all your sins. Ask the Father to forgive you, you've forgiven everyone. Again it's like there's a threshold. To get into Heaven you have to be forgiven by the Lord, which He desperately wants to do. He wants to offer His mercy to each and every person. But we also need to forgive others because Heaven is the place of forgiveness. All the sins, all the hurts, the brokenness, the tears they'll be in the past. They'll be forgiven, they'll be forgotten, they disappear. In Heaven there is no unforgiveness and so you can't get into Heaven if you still have unforgiveness in your heart. And that's why the Lord says if you don't forgive the sins of others neither can your Father forgive you your sins. And it's not that the Father doesn't desperately want to forgive us our sins, He does! That's why Jesus came to die for us. Jesus leads the way in showing us how to forgive. God the Father wants to forgive our sins, but He can't if we're holding on to unforgiveness. It's kind of like if you have a gift that you want to give someone, but their hands are full already. I'll say your gonna have to put that down so I can give you what I want to. As long as your holding on to unforgiveness I can't give you forgiveness. We have to let go of our unforgiveness first. And again we all want this don't we? We wanna be in that place, we wanna be in Heaven where all our sins are forgiven, they're forgotten forever. It's like they never happened. God will make us new. Of course we want that. Well if we want that we have to be

willing to forgive. And so we should end our lives with forgiveness but before that, as good Catholics, we should be ending our day every day with a good examination of conscience. We ask the Lord to forgive us for the ways we've sinned throughout the day and also we should forgive the people who have hurt us. Before we go to bed every night to have a heart of forgiveness. And the easy way to do that is part of your examination of conscience is just pray the Our Father – Father forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us. That beautiful prayer Jesus Himself taught us brings us into that reality. And so we need to end our lives with forgiveness, certainly we should every day with forgiveness. And maybe we're in the middle of a situation right now where we're squabbling with someone, there's hurt going back and forth and we should just very quickly be like I forgive, I'm done, I don't want this anymore. I'm not hanging on to unforgiveness. I'm gonna drop it. Or think of it like this, I think of it like a game of hot potato. Like someone tosses you a hot potato what do you do? You get rid of it. You throw it away quickly because when you hang on to the hot potato it burns your hands. And so too when someone hurts us, don't hang on to that unforgiveness. First of all it's heavy, it weighs you down, it occupies your mind, you're carrying a weight, it's burning you. What's the saying – unforgiveness is like drinking poison hoping it kills the other person. Well no you're the one drinking the poison. It's only hurting you. And so for each of us forgiveness should be a way of life. An obedience to Jesus, an imitation of Jesus who quickly and immediately forgave no questions. Always forgiving. It's like aren't we always in one way or another getting hurt everyday anyways? We can all carry around that stuff every day. That's why we need to just release it quickly. We need to be in this habit of forgiving like it's second nature. It needs to be a way of life. And when we're able to do that it's like we get a foretaste of Heaven even now because we experience the lightness, the grace of living in the forgiveness of God. Being forgiven by God, forgiving others, not carrying unforgiveness. Do you want a foretaste of Heaven even in this life? Then forgive! The Lord is asking you to forgive from your heart this morning and He will help you do it if you're willing to learn from Him.

Amen