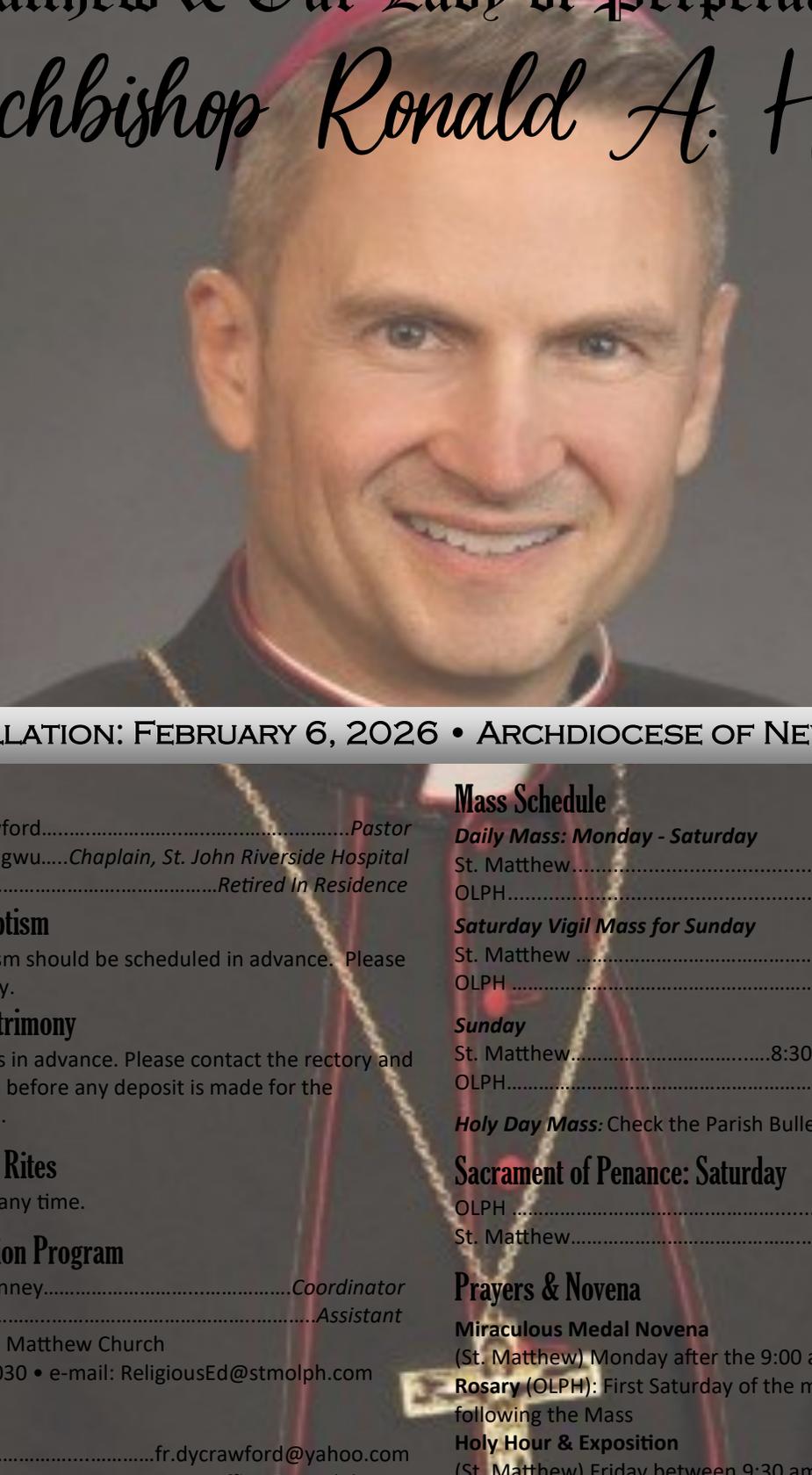


THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF

# St. Matthew & Our Lady of Perpetual Help

## Archbishop Ronald A. Hicks



**INSTALLATION: FEBRUARY 6, 2026 • ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK**

### Clergy

Rev. Douglas Crawford.....*Pastor*  
Rev. Nicholas Nwagwu.....*Chaplain, St. John Riverside Hospital*  
Rev. George Lodi.....*Retired In Residence*

### Sacrament of Baptism

The date for baptism should be scheduled in advance. Please contact the Rectory.

### Sacrament of Matrimony

Arranged 6 months in advance. Please contact the rectory and speak with a Priest before any deposit is made for the wedding reception.

### Anointing & Last Rites

Call the rectory at any time.

### Religious Education Program

Mrs. Stephanie Bonney.....*Coordinator*  
Mr. Jay A. Conklin.....*Assistant*  
Office Location: St. Matthew Church  
Phone: 914-693-0030 • e-mail: ReligiousEd@stmolph.com

### Parish Emails

Fr. Crawford.....fr.dycrawford@yahoo.com  
Rectory Office.....office@stmolph.com

### Mass Schedule

#### Daily Mass: Monday - Saturday

St. Matthew.....9:00 am  
OLPH.....8:00 am

#### Saturday Vigil Mass for Sunday

St. Matthew ..... 5:30 pm  
OLPH .....4:00 pm

#### Sunday

St. Matthew.....8:30 am & 11:30 am  
OLPH.....10:00 am

*Holy Day Mass:* Check the Parish Bulletin for schedule.

### Sacrament of Penance: Saturday

OLPH .....3:00 - 3:45 pm  
St. Matthew.....4:30 - 5:15 pm

### Prayers & Novena

#### Miraculous Medal Novena

(St. Matthew) Monday after the 9:00 am Mass

**Rosary (OLPH):** First Saturday of the month immediately following the Mass

#### Holy Hour & Exposition

(St. Matthew) Friday between 9:30 am - 10:30 am

**February 8, 2026 • 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time**

# Mass Intentions

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7**

(A) 4:00 pm Patrick Bohan †

(H) 5:30 pm Uta Atzrodt †

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8**

(H) 8:30 am Veronica Greenfield †

(A) 10:00 am Olga Pecora †

(H) 11:30 am Richard Audevard †

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9**

(A) 8:00 am Helen Schmidt †

(H) 9:00 am Gladys Hovo †

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10**

(A) 8:00 am Intentions of Zeljko Salinovic & Family

(H) 9:00 am Intentions of Mariyana Lugo & Family

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11**

(A) 8:00 am Intentions of Mike Wolff

(H) 9:00 am Souls in Purgatory

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12**

(A) 8:00 am Kathleen Utchel †

(H) 9:00 am Missa Pro Popolo

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13**

(A) 8:00 am Intentions of Jimena

(H) 9:00 am William Gunther †

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14**

(A) 8:00 am Intentions of Scarlett Cajas

(H) 9:00 am Cheryl Ballantine †

(A) 4:00 pm Adilson Momesso deOliveira †

(H) 5:30 pm Agnes Zambarbieri †

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15**

(H) 8:30 am Margaret Cunningham †

(A) 10:00 am Josie & Tony Gagliano †

(H) 11:30 am George Richter †

(H) - Hastings: St. Matthew

(A) - Ardsley: Our Lady of Perpetual Help

**REQUESTED BY:**

Noeleen Bohan McGovern

Sherry Family

Nancy Maleska & John Galayda

Family

Theresa & George Febles &

Family

Virginia Markman

Elizabeth

Rose Utchel

Bassmann Family

Family

Bryan Healy

Stela Mota

Maureen Barry

Ann Larkin

Camille Gutierrez

Phyllis Richter



Our prayers during Mass are spiritually important and bring benefit and

comfort to those who have experienced a loss or acute need. If you would like to arrange for a Mass to be said for the repose of the soul of a loved one or for a special intention, please visit or call the parish office 914-478-2822 or you can schedule a time using the online website. You can also request to memorialize the tabernacle candles on the altars. The direct links can be found on the parish website: [www.stmolph.com](http://www.stmolph.com)

*"A religion that doesn't interfere with secular order will soon discover that the secular order will not refrain from interfering with it."*  
- Abp. Fulton J. Sheen



Our monthly food collection continues for the Hastings Food Pantry. Parishioners are invited to bring non-perishable food donations to Mass at either church on the second weekend of each month, which will be this weekend, February 7th & 8th. Please no glass, open or expired items and please do not leave food donations at other times.

**eScrip** The parish received \$172.87 for the month of November and \$204.40 for December from the Foodtown Gives Back program!

Thank you to the 158 parishioners who have signed up for this free program. Sign up to participate in the program by emailing the 10 or 12 digit number from your Foodtown keychain card or paper receipt to [office@stmolph.com](mailto:office@stmolph.com).



February 8, 2026 - 5th Sunday of Ordinary Time

**Reading I: Isaiah 58: 7-10**

True religion requires easing the burdens of others by providing them with the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter. That makes the provider a true light in the darkness.

**Reading II: 1 Corinthians 2: 1-5**

God saves the world through what is held to be foolish and weak. In that way God alone can be praised for the result.

**The Gospel: Matthew 5: 13-16**

Disciples described as “salt” means that they season and preserve the world for God. As “light” they are to bear witness to Jesus and His message so that they shine out to the world.



the **CARDINAL'S**  
ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP APPEAL  
*Sharing God's Gifts*

To make your donation, please use the form you received in the mail, or make your donation online at [www.cardinalsappeal.org](http://www.cardinalsappeal.org)

**\$54,000**

**Our Parish Goal**

**\$7,218.50**  
Pledged

**\$7,068.50**  
Paid



**When making your donation, please remember to select DIRECT MY GIFT TO: MY PARISH and then select our parish from the drop down menu.**

**Donations & Pledges received from 24 families  
13.36% of our goal. Thank you!**



Brian Dunne-USN  
Christopher Gaulin-USA  
George Moore-USN  
Michael Germain-USN  
Peter Dillon-USCG  
Chris Minozzi-USMC  
Sean Roth-USA  
Mike Gibbons-USMC  
Nick Lumalcuri - USN  
Claire Sherry - USAF

## COLLECTION REPORT:

**Weekend: February 1: COLD WEEKEND**

Sunday 2/1: \$5,528  
Parish Giving \$1,780  
Weekend Total: \$7,308  
Fuel Collection: \$1,566

**Upcoming Second Collections**

February 8: Peter's Pence  
February 15: Maintenance & Repair  
March 1: Maintenance & Repair  
March 8: Catholic Relief Services

## Online Giving

St. Matthew & Our Lady of Perpetual Help offers two ways to make church contributions online:  
**Zelle and Parish Giving**



**Parish Giving**

For Parish Giving use the QR Code or visit the website: [www.paritygiving.org](http://www.paritygiving.org) and search for **St. Matthew & OLPH Church**



**zelle**

Scan the QR Code in your banking app to find: **The St. Matthew** or find us using our email address [office@stmolph.com](mailto:office@stmolph.com)

**Please Note:** The church's legal name is so long that our bank only uses the first several characters, hence why in Zelle our name shows up as: **The St. Matthew**

## CANDLE DEDICATIONS



**OLPH Tabernacle Candle**  
*In Memory of Fred Wolff, Jr.*  
req. by Wolff Family

**St. Matthew Tabernacle Candle**  
*In Memory of Cheryl Ballantine*  
req. by Mary Ellen & William Ballantine

**St. Matthew Blessed Mother Candle**  
*In Memory of Harry J. Bloomer, Sr.*  
req. by Bryan Healy



**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES** continue this weekend, Sunday, February 8th at STM and on Wednesday, February 11th at OLPH

**WEDNESDAY PROGRAM at OLPH SCHOOL** Grades 1-4 meet from 4:00pm to 5:00pm and Grades 5 & 6 meet from 6:30pm to 7:30pm

**SUNDAY PROGRAM at ST. MATTHEW SCHOOL:** Grades 1-6 meet from 9:45am - 10:45am

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ATTENDANCE ENVELOPES:** All students must drop in the collection basket their **ATTENDANCE ENVELOPE** for the corresponding week. If you are not able to attend Mass at STM or OLPH, please get a bulletin, signed by the Priest, from the church where you attended Mass. Staple your attendance envelope to the bulletin and give it to your teacher the next week. Mass attendance will be kept tract of during the year.



**2025 Contribution Statements**

This year's contribution statements were emailed to everyone on Tuesday, January 13th. If you did not see it in your "inbox" please check your "spam/junk" mail folders.

You can also view this document with your list of donations online anytime by clicking the "My Info" link at the bottom of any Flocknote email and then clicking on the **Giving** tab. You will see the 2025 Donor Summary at the bottom of the page.

*Please remember, Charitable Donations statements are for collections only and do not include Mass Cards, Religious Education Tuition, Cardinal's Appeal or Renew+Rebuild donations.*

***If you give through PARISH GIVING, you will receive a separate email from them directly.***



**Ministry to Homebound Parishioners**

For those parishioners who are homebound or elderly, please reach out to the Rectory if you are interested in having a priest visit to hear your confession, receive the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and receive Holy Communion. Please call 914-478-2822.



**Support Our Parish**

We rely on the generosity of parishioners and visitors in order for our Parish to thrive. We would not be able to fulfill our mission without your financial support. Also, please remember St. Matthew & Our Lady of Perpetual Help in your Will or Living Trust. Kindly contact the rectory office with your inquiries.



St. Matthew & Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish is eager to recruit new Lectors and Ushers for both churches.

If you feel you have a calling for either of these two important ministries within the parish, please contact Fr. Crawford




**Please keep in your prayers the ill of our parish especially: Charles Green,**

**And for those who have died marked by the sign of faith, especially:**

*If you would like to add the name of a loved one to the prayer list, please contact the rectory: 914-478-2822*



**In the event of a weather cancellation, we will do our best to notify all through Flocknote. If you have not yet signed up for Flocknote, please visit:**

**[www.flocknote.com/stmolph](http://www.flocknote.com/stmolph)**

**Also note: if the weather is bad (snow, ice) for driving, the 8am Daily Mass at OLPH will be automatically cancelled for the safety of all.**

# From India to China, a Discreet Stifling of the Christian Faith.

by Hortense Leger

*The 2026 World Watch List, published by Open Doors on January 14, reveals dramatic figures: Never before has religious freedom of Christians been so threatened.*

The World Watch List, published by the Protestant non-profit Open Doors on January 14, 2026, reveals an alarming observation: Never since the creation of this international benchmark in 1993 has the religious freedom of Christians seemed so fragile.

**Fifteen countries have reached the threshold of extreme persecution for the first time**, a worrying increase.

Twenty-six out of 50 countries have seen their scores worsen. Between October 2024 and September 2025, **more than 4,849 Christians were killed for their faith**, an increase from the previous year.

**Nearly 388 million Christians now live in regions where persecution is considered severe**, representing one in seven Christians worldwide.



While sub-Saharan Africa draws attention to the brutality of the violence committed on its soil, a more discreet but equally destructive threat is now spreading across several continents. The 2026 Index highlights **the acceleration of what could be called “insidious” persecution**, based on the systematic stifling of religious freedoms through administrative, legislative, or digital means.

## India: human rights curtailed for Christians

In India, the **proliferation of “anti-conversion” laws** illustrates this trend. In 2025, Rajasthan became the 12th state to adopt legislation that makes it possible to arbitrarily arrest pastors, ban public preaching, and potentially criminalize any personal attempt to convert from Hinduism to another religion. This legislative crackdown is accompanied by daily intimidation, arrests, and acts of violence aimed at isolating Christian minorities from Indian society. **Christian families live under threat**, some children are excluded from schools, and freedom of conversion continues to decline, creating a climate of fear.

On June 21, 2025, Hindu extremists attacked a Christian community in the Odisha region, leaving 20 people seriously injured. On June 26, two nuns and a pastor were arrested and charged with forced conversions. As for **Nepal**, it made a comeback in the Index in 2026, ranking 46th after disappearing from the list in 2022. The rise of Hindu nationalist ideology, against a backdrop of political instability, has led to the enforcement of anti-conversion laws similar to those adopted in India. They target Christian communities in particular. Conversely, **Vietnam leaves the Index for the first time**: no attacks on churches or murders of Christians have been recorded there this year.

## In China, bringing religion into line with Party doctrines

China has also taken a new step in its **control of religion**, rising to 17th place on the Index. In 2025, the ban on all religious education for minors was strictly enforced. The authorities have been stepping up police raids, **dispersing unofficial churches and forcing their leaders** to show their support for the Communist Party.

The policy of “sinicization” of religions suppresses any independent expression of faith: at least 1,000 churches have been closed in 2025. In addition, the “Regulations on the Online Behavior of Religious Personnel,” published by the Party in September 2025, prevents any online evangelism or Christian mobilization. In July 2025, more than 300 police officers arrested 70 Christians in eastern China, with some receiving fines for meeting in private places.

## The isolation of Christians in Algeria

If Pope Leo is able to visit Algeria in the coming months as he has indicated, he might weigh in on the situation of Christian persecution there. In Algeria, the religious landscape is gradually closing in on Christians. As of the end of 2025, forty-seven churches belonging to the Protestant Church of Algeria were permanently closed, many sealed by order of the authorities. **Three-quarters of Algerian Christians now live in isolation**, deprived of any real community, sometimes even of any contact with other believers.

State control also extends to the virtual world, with the **sudden closure in 2025 of a large Christian Facebook group** with more than 60,000 subscribers. Administrative pressure and surveillance of these communities constitute a form of violence that receives little media coverage but is gradually ostracising Algeria's 156,000 Christians.

These “insidious persecutions” don't make much noise, but they're **gradually depriving Christians of any space for freedom and pushing them underground**. They reveal a new form of persecution which, far from being limited to physical violence, is now infiltrating the legislative, administrative, and digital apparatus of entire societies.

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# 3 Things That Destroy Friendships.

by Fr. Michael Rennie

*While it's natural for the circumstances of life and time to change our friendships, some obstacles should be recognized and confronted.*

As I get older, I increasingly struggle to hold onto friendships from earlier in life. This is sometimes my fault. It often is no one's fault. My friends from high school scattered after graduation. For a while, we would get together a few times a year at the holidays to reconnect, but eventually the common ground we used to share dissipated. Most of us were off at college. Without seeing each other every day, our topics of conversation became stale. It's still fun to see an old friend and reminisce but the relationships are no longer vital. They feel different, something from the past worth cherishing but very much belonging to the past.



It's the same story with college friends. For four years, we shared an intense, strongly felt connection. We were all away from home, discovering adulthood together, having the time of our lives in the dorms. Friendships were formed quickly. We had energy to burn and stayed up late, being irresponsible and finding our footing as we explored heady philosophical and political topics. In youth, every experience is new, each one opens a bright shining path in the mind, and the neurons lock the intensity of the moment into memory. The experiences are intense and feel more important than anything that had happened before or would ever happen in the future. When I think back, those events still feel like they happened yesterday. We swear to remain friends always, but are rarely able to keep our promises. Soon enough, graduation takes us back to hometowns or on to new adventures. These days, my old college town feels like it's haunted with the ghosts of College Past.

Even the friendships I formed in my young adult years have shifted. Once I married and we started having children, friendships with single friends became harder to hold onto because we started living different lives. I spend time these days with friends who have children in the same age range as mine, and with friends I've made at church. I cannot emphasize enough how valuable our parish has become to my family's social life. The parish allows us to see the same people multiple times every week. The bonds we've formed with them are nourished by continuing contact, unlike the friends I rarely see anymore.

I would reckon that the vast majority of us have felt the guilt of losing touch with old friends. Maybe you've even thought about texting one of them and then, for reasons unknown, decided not to. We so desperately want to stay in touch but life has other ideas. Friendship is a valuable commodity - we cannot be happy without at least some good friends - and yet it's hard to achieve long-lasting, stable friendships. Beyond the challenges posed to friendship by time and distance, I thought I might share a few thoughts on other factors that create difficulty, and why some friendships that ought to be vital and rewarding end up dying of neglect or conflict.

**Over-commitment** - One challenge to friendship is, ironically, wanting too much or allowing a friend to demand too much in terms of emotional intimacy or time. Friendships can sometimes become claustrophobic and overly demanding. Sometimes, friends want all your attention all the time. They want a return text right away. Over-committed relationships ask too much of us and misplace the value of friendship. A friend cannot become a substitute for healthy relationships with God and family. The solution to this is setting healthy boundaries. This helps to keep the friendship from being weighed down by undue pressure.

**Envy** - One of the results of over-commitment is envy. I've seen friend-groups treat one of their own terribly for simply spending time with another person or trying to introduce a new person to the group. They're jealous of the new relationship and secretly feel it as a personal insult, thinking it exists because of an inadequacy in themselves. I've also witnessed friendships come apart because one person experienced positive changes in their circumstances while the other friend didn't. One went to college, the other stayed home. One got married, the other remained single. One got involved in church, the other was uninterested. Jealousy attacks a friendship by introducing division.

The cure for jealousy is maintaining an intentional attitude of always wanting the best for each other. Friends seek the good for each other and celebrate each other's successes, even when those successes introduce changes into the friendship.

**Absence of shared challenges** - Some of the best friends I ever made is from bonding over mutual suffering. There are my seminary friends and the long hours we spent studying, arguing theology, and complaining about our teachers. There are my fellow priests with whom I feel deep camaraderie over the pitfalls of ministry, liturgies gone bad, and our personal foibles. There are my married friends who we hang out with to swap war stories about parenting and enjoy a precious few hours of speaking to another adult.

All of these friends, I've bonded with over shared challenges. We're pursuing the same goals and get excited by the same things. Friends I'm not as close to anymore, for the most part, have goals that have diverged from my own. We get together when we can and still enjoy each other's company, but the bond feels less vital because we're no longer moving in quite the same direction.

*Continued Next Page...*

The solution to drifting apart can be solved by the introduction of shared experiences and taking an active interest in each other's goals, and also understanding that, sometimes, the divergence of goals is inevitable.

In the end, it's important to keep in sight how valuable and precious it is to have strong friendships. A good friend brings tremendous joy, offers new perspectives, and allows us the chance to live in community with others. Sometimes old friends drift away and new friends appear. That's only natural, but what I've learned over the course of my life is that a friendship shouldn't be taken for granted and casually discarded.

Sure, we don't strictly require friendship in order to earn money, eat, and survive, but I'm always reminded of the wisdom of C.S. Lewis, who says that even if friends aren't necessary for survival, they are one of God's gifts that give value to survival. With good friends, we don't simply endure life. We thrive.

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## The 4 People You Need to Forgive to Change Your Life.

*by Cerith Gardiner*

*If 2026 already feels heavy, the reason may not be what you expect.*

Now that we're a few weeks into the new year, we thought we could take stock of how galvanized we truly are for the year ahead. After all, there's often a quiet pressure to reinvent yourself when we leave the last year behind: New habits, new goals, a cleaner slate. But what if the most powerful reset for 2026 isn't about doing more — but about letting go?

A short message that's been circulating on social media lately offers a surprisingly timeless insight: if you want to live fully in the present, there are four groups of people you may need to forgive. It's not a new idea. In fact, it's as old as the Gospel.

And it begins closer to home than we might like.

**First: Your parents — whether they're still living or not** - Forgiveness here doesn't mean denying the pain or pretending everything was fine. It means acknowledging that even those who loved us deeply were imperfect. Holding onto resentment toward them often anchors us to a version of the past we can't change. Forgiveness loosens that grip — not for their sake, but for yours.

**Second: Those from past relationships that didn't work out** - Breakups leave scars — and lessons. Some of them taught you what love is not; others revealed what you truly need. When we replay old hurts, we keep old chapters alive. Forgiveness allows gratitude to replace bitterness and makes room for future joy.

**Third: Anyone else who has hurt you** - This is often the hardest. Words spoken carelessly. Trust broken. Wounds that still ache. Yet clinging to these injuries doesn't protect you — it imprisons you. Forgiveness doesn't excuse the harm; it frees you from carrying it forever.

**And finally: yourself** - This may be the most overlooked forgiveness of all. For the poor decisions. The sharp words. The missed opportunities. The moments you wish you could undo. Shame keeps us stuck in the past; mercy moves us forward. God never tires of forgiving — but sometimes we do.

For Catholics, this path of release finds its deepest expression in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Confession is not about reliving your worst moments — it's about handing them over. It's where forgiveness becomes tangible, spoken aloud, and received with grace. The burden lifts not because you've justified yourself, but because mercy has met you exactly where you are.

As 2026 unfolds, living in the present may mean doing less looking back — except to forgive. Forgiveness doesn't erase memory, but it changes its power. It turns wounds into wisdom and regret into humility.

You don't have to resolve everything overnight. But choosing forgiveness — even imperfectly — is a decision to stop letting yesterday dictate today. And that choice, quietly made, can change everything.

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With a bachelor of science in Management Sciences from UMIST in England, Cerith Gardiner started her teaching career as a catechist to young children and now she teaches English to art students at Penninghen in Paris, France. She has been writing for Aleteia for four years, relying on her experiences as a mom of four, and a sister to eight to help guide her along the way.

