

Forgiveness

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Bishop Said Hana's words, "I'm afraid that to stop good, selfishness is enough," remind us how fragile goodness is. It doesn't take great evil to stop love and kindness—just a selfish act, like refusing to forgive, can block goodness in our lives and the world.

One of the best ways to fight evil is through forgiveness. When we forgive, we free both ourselves and others from pain and resentment. Forgiveness is like a cure for hatred, a light in the darkness.

A great example is Padre Pio, a holy man. One day, a man came to confession but refused to forgive his father. Padre Pio told him to pray, "And don't forgive my sins as long as I don't forgive my father." These words, a twist on the Lord's Prayer, made the man realize his mistake—how could he ask for God's mercy while refusing to show mercy to someone else?

A few days later, the man came back, ready to forgive. He said, "Padre, I want to forgive my father because I am a sinner and need forgiveness too."

This is the heart of the Gospel: when we see our own need for mercy, we become more willing to show mercy to others.

I would like to give a personal testimony. My first confession was very, very hard. My grandmother prepared me for my First Communion and Confession. I went to confession with small sins—I was just a normal child. But the priest treated me really harshly. He shouted at me and gave me a huge penance. I was very upset and started crying. I ran to my grandmother and told her I would never go back. For many years, I didn't go to confession.

When I was a teenager, my mom got sick. She had skin cancer. My brother and I went to visit her in the hospital, but we couldn't find her room. A nurse gave us the room number.

We walked in and didn't recognize the woman in the bed. It was our mom. She looked very different and sick.

My brother asked, "Is that our mom?"

I said, "Yes."

But one thing helped us know it was her—her hands. They were bruised and changed, but they were the hands that had hugged us, sent us to school, and made our sandwiches. We knew her by her hands.

Really, we knew her by love.

I hope that in heaven, someone will know us by our hands too—by our kindness and love.

When my mom died, my whole world fell apart. I couldn't cope. I started looking for help. I began to pray. And then, I heard a voice in my head say, "You will become a priest."

I couldn't believe it. I ran to the church—I hadn't been there in years. It was the first Friday of the month, and many people were waiting for confession. I walked toward the confessional, feeling afraid because I remembered my first confession.

But this time, the priest was kind and gentle. I will never forget that confession.

Today, that same priest and I are in the same congregation. He doesn't even know he once heard my confession. But I will always remember that moment.

Selfishness stops goodness because it closes our hearts. It traps us in pride and bitterness. But forgiveness opens the way to love and grace. If we want God to forgive us, we must forgive others. Then, His goodness can heal us and the world.

Satan's biggest mistake was his pride. He didn't rebel because of truth or love, but because he refused to accept anything greater than himself. Instead of asking, "Who is like God?" in humility, he asked, "Who is like me?" He chose pride over truth and isolated himself.

Satan created his own version of "good," which is actually evil. He refused to follow God, believing his way was better. Sin is exactly that—putting ourselves at the center and deciding right and wrong for ourselves. Instead of seeing God as the source of goodness, Satan twisted goodness into selfishness and harm.

His fall is a warning to us. When we are selfish, proud, or refuse to follow God, we act like Satan, believing our way is better than God's. This is the root of sin—an ego that refuses to submit to truth.

But true holiness starts with humility. The Archangel Michael, whose name means "Who is like God?" reminds us that only God is great. Those who follow Him don't seek their own glory, but know that all goodness comes from Him.

Satan's pride leads to emptiness and separation from God. But those who choose humility and recognize God's greatness find joy, freedom, and life. The difference between heaven and hell is simple: heaven is full of love for God, and hell is full of love for self.

Saint Paul describes a struggle we all face:

"I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." (Romans 7:19)

Why do we want to do good but still fail? Why do we know what is right but struggle to do it?

The answer is in our human nature. We are made in God's image and desire goodness, but sin has weakened us. There is a constant battle between spirit and flesh, grace and sin.

This struggle is not just about personal weakness—it started with Adam and Eve. When they disobeyed God, the connection between God and humanity was broken. Since then, we have all been tempted toward selfishness and sin.

But Saint Paul gives us hope:

“Who will free me from this struggle? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”
(Romans 7:24-25)

We cannot win this battle alone. But through Jesus, we can. He came to heal us and give us strength. The sacraments, especially Confession and the Eucharist, restore what sin weakens.

Recognizing our weakness should not make us lose hope. The saints became holy by trusting in God, not by their own strength. Saint Augustine said:

“Do not despair; one thief was saved. Do not presume; one thief was lost.”

This means we must trust in God’s mercy but also make an effort to follow Him.

To grow in holiness, we should:

Pray daily, asking for strength.

Go to Confession often, receiving God’s mercy.

Receive the Eucharist, being nourished by Christ.

Show love and make sacrifices, training our hearts in virtue.

Our desire to be good comes from God. Though we fail, we must rely on His grace, not just our own effort. Saint Paul’s struggle is our struggle, but his victory in Christ is also our victory.

Spiritual warfare is real. Every Christian faces it. This is not a physical battle but a fight against sin, temptation, and the lies of the devil.

From the beginning, people have struggled with this. Adam and Eve listened to Satan’s lies and turned away from God. Today, we still feel this struggle: choosing holiness or giving in to sin, trusting God or listening to doubt.

Saint Paul reminds us that our fight is not against other people, but against the forces of darkness. Our real enemy is not the world but sin, which tries to control us, and lies, which twist God’s truth.

Satan’s tricks are always the same:

Deception – making us doubt God’s truth.

Division – turning people against each other.

Discouragement – making us feel alone or hopeless.

He wants us to believe we are too sinful to change and that holiness is impossible. But these are lies—Jesus has already won the victory.

How Do We Fight Back?

Our best defense is a strong relationship with God. Jesus gave us everything we need to stand firm:

Prayer – especially the Rosary, a powerful weapon because Mary, who defeated the devil, prays for us.

The Sacraments – the Eucharist fills us with Jesus’ presence, and Confession cleanses us from sin.

Scripture – God’s truth protects us from lies.

A Watchful Heart – being aware of temptation and choosing to trust God.

We must remember that Satan’s power is limited. He is not equal to God—he is just a fallen creature. His goal is not just to hurt us, but to turn us away from God through pride, despair, and indifference.

But God gives us the strength to resist. The saints show us that no temptation is stronger than God’s grace, no sin is beyond His mercy, and no darkness can overcome His light.

This spiritual battle happens in everyday life—when we choose:

To forgive instead of holding a grudge.

To trust God instead of living in fear.

To stay faithful instead of compromising.

Each small victory weakens the enemy and strengthens our souls.

Jesus has already won the war through His death and resurrection. The battle still continues, but we are not alone—He fights for us.

Our job is to stay faithful, keep our focus on Him, and never lose hope.

In the end, God wins. And those who stay with Him will share in His victory.