

Parish Meeting Prayers

For use in February 2023

Introduction

Leader In our relationship with others, Jesus teaches us to go beyond the Jewish norms with generosity and forgiveness—even to those who do us harm.

Opening Prayer

All Forgiving Father, how difficult it is for us to forgive those who harm us. Help us to grow in forgiving others in the spirit of Jesus whose clear, remarkable teachings urge us to become compassionate. We ask this in his name. Amen.

Word of God Matthew 5:38-39, 43-48

Reader A reading from the Gospel of Matthew (Pause for silent reflection)

Optional Discuss these questions in two's or three's. *The reading is on the reverse side.*

1. Cite an example of forgiveness of one who did harm to another that exemplifies Jesus' remarkable teaching.
1. What are some personal benefits of forgiving another?

Response *Matthew 5:38-39, 43-48*

Side 1 "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

Side 2 Help us to forgive and pray for our enemies, which we can do only through your gift of grace.

Side 1 "If you love those who love you, what recompense will you have?"

Side 2` In our parish and other community interactions, may our love extend beyond those who love or admire us.

Side 1 "If you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that?"

Side 2 Help us to extend hospitality within our neighborhoods and wider community.

Petitions Individuals add intentions to remember here.

Closing Prayer

Forgiving God, we need your grace to forgive. May we always remember how Jesus loved even his enemies—to his death. We turn to you for support, for growth in hospitality, forgiveness, and compassion. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 5:38-39, 43-48

Jesus said to his disciples:

“You have heard that it was said,
‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’

But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil.
When someone strikes you on your right cheek,
turn the other one as well.

“You have heard that it was said,
‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

But I say to you, love your enemies
and pray for those who persecute you,
that you may be children of your heavenly Father,
for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good,
and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust.

For if you love those who love you, what recompense will
you have?

Do not the tax collectors do the same?
And if you greet your brothers only,
what is unusual about that?

Do not the pagans do the same?
So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.”