Forgiveness and health

Forgiveness can be good for a person’s health. Studies show that an outpouring of grudges and bitterness can improve health and lead to greater peace of mind. Benefits may include:

- Healthier relationships
- Improved mental health
- Less anxiety, stress and hostility
- Lower blood pressure
- Improved immune response
- Stronger immune system
- Improved heart health
- Improved social support

I am created by God and put here on earth for a purpose. I may not know, this side of the grave, what my purpose is. But if I do my best, in the circumstances of my own life, to be Jesus as much as I am able to live, I will accomplish my purpose. In the eyes of the world, what I do may not seem all that important. It probably won’t make me famous. But there is no greater, more important accomplishment than simply doing what it is God put me here to do.

So the question is: Am I doing my best to live the Gospel in the situation of my own life? Am I having the effect that God intended me to have in my life?

There comes a time when I need to know what in my life needs to be cultivated... and what needs to be cut out.

Trademark of Christians

In the Gospel, the word “forgive” is on the lips of Jesus 41 times, including those remarkable words from the cross: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Forgiveness was a gift Jesus was happy to give. It was the first thing he did for the paralytic. He wanted to do it for many others... if they would only let him. Jesus was so generous that a gift, this gift, the gift he is able to give, but the serpents and Pharisees were sometimes scandalized.

Jesus gave forgiveness as a gift to people who didn’t do anything to merit it, to people who wouldn’t even give thought to it. It was atonement on the cross, freely given.

I am living up to the words I pray in the Our Father.

About the Little Book...

In 1999, Bishop Ken Uittenbogaart of the Catholic Diocese of Saginaw, Michigan, decided to create a Little Black book.

The purpose of the book, he said, would be simple: To encourage people to pray... even for only for six minutes a day.

To accomplish that, the Little Black Book would use the teachings of the saints to offer divina to help people pray the passion of the Lord.

The Little Black Book debuted in 2000 as a Lenten reflection book for the bishop’s mid-Michigan diocese. Since then, the book has been published in various languages and is available in both English and Spanish edition, and a children’s version (Little Purple Book). Soon word of the Little Books began to spread to parishes throughout Michigan and the Midwest, and the Saginaw Diocese was flooded with requests for copies.

The following liturgical year, Bishop Uittenbogaart added a Little Blue Book for the Advent/Christmas season, and a Little White Book for the Holy Week/Rosary season. Later, he invented a Little Berry 구체 종이, an undated four-week reflection on stewardship in light of the Gospels. The first Little Berry 구체 종이 was based on the Gospel of Luke; similar books based on the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, John and Luke were later added.

Bishop Uittenbogaart died 15 years ago, on March 27, 2004, but writings, talks and books remain a testament to his works and the reflections on the right-hand side of Little Books.

Today, more than three million books are distributed annually worldwide.

This Lenten booklet is based on the writings of Bishop Ken Uittenbogaart, and put together by Catherine Haven, editor of the Little Books, with the help of Sr. Nancy Ayotte, IHM, who works with the Catechists of the Good Shepherd.

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For additional books, contact:
Little Books of the Diocese of Saginaw, Inc. P.O. Box 6099, Saginaw, MI 48608-6099 (989) 797-6653 FAX (989) 797-6660 or visit them at www.littlebooks.org

Reconciliation, forgiveness

I am a disciple of the Lord, and the Lord taught me to forgive everyone my way. On the cross, the Lord even forgave those who were crucifying him. Forgiveness is not an easy task, but it is entirely within our reach.

Forgiveness is distinct from reconciliation. Reconciliation requires the cooperation of both parties. Forgiveness requires the action of only one party... me. Even if reconciliation in one form or another is possible, I don’t know of anyone who doesn’t have some unforgivable baggage from the past. I need to let go of this, to cut it loose. This involves not only forgiving others, but also asking forgiveness of those I have wronged.

The Gospel, the word “forgive” is on the lips of Jesus 41 times, including those remarkable words from the cross: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Forgiveness was a gift Jesus was happy to give. It was the first thing he did for the paralytic. He wanted to do it for many others... if they would only let him. Jesus was so generous that a gift, this gift, the gift he is able to give, but the serpents and Pharisees were sometimes scandalized.

Jesus gave forgiveness as a gift to people who didn’t do anything to merit it, to people who wouldn’t even give thought to it. It was atonement on the cross, freely given.

I am living up to the words I pray in the Our Father.

March 17, 2019 "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

St. Stephen’s last words while being stoned. (Acts 7:60)

Today is the feast of St. Patrick.

Patrick was born to wealthy Christian parents a little over 1,600 years ago in a part of Britain called Galloway. At the age of 16, while on his father’s country estate, he was kidnapped by pirates and taken to pagan Ireland where he was sold as a slave. After six years of servitude, he escaped and found his way back home. Strongly enough, while he was a slave, Patrick’s spiritual life deepened. After his escape, he went to Gaul where he received a mission. During his training there, he learned to forgive his captors. He also realized that he was called to convert the Irish pagans by returning one day to Ireland to preach the Gospel. Eventually Patrick was ordained a priest and became a bishop, before being granted his wish to go back to Ireland.

His mission to Ireland lasted 30 years. During that time he established missions in overcrowded parishes and schools throughout the country. He is credited with its eventual conversion.

He died March 17, 461 A.D.

Tuesday Before Ash Wednesday

Today is the last day of Ordinary Time in the Church’s liturgical year until it resumes on the day after Pentecost. During Ordinary Time, the Church traditionally wears green vestments while celebrating Mass.

The Church’s liturgical year begins with the first Sunday of Advent and ends on the Saturday before the next New Year’s Day. The framework of the year is fixed, but there are variations within it because of the date of Easter changes from year to year.

The first day of the liturgical year is called Ordinary Time - weeks that are numbered, e.g. the “20th Sunday of the Year.” The phrase “ordinary time” can be misleading in English, since it implies “pedestrian.” Actually, it is a literal translation of the Latin “tempus non sanctum” - “not a saint’s time.”

There are four special seasons: Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. The entire year works out this way: 39 weeks of Ordinary Time (22-28 days). Season of Advent (19-23 days). Season of Christmas (6-8 days). Ordinary Time from end of Christmas season to Lent (19-26 days). Lent (5-7 weeks). Ordinary Time of Lent (13 days). Season of Easter (50 days). Ordinary Time from end of Easter season to Ascension (173-201 days).

An Easter thought

Easter isn’t just a feast.

It’s a whole season. It’s a 50-day season to celebrate something that caught light in my darkest day.

What is that something? Getting ready for this to take place everyday in God’s hands. It’s not hard to do. God’s embrace always embraces me despite my failures along the way.

Then when I die, I continue to place myself in the hands of God, and God brings me through death.

It’s true. Jesus showed the way.

Happy Easter.