

Homily Outline for the 24th Sunday of the Year – Cycle A
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
September 13, 2020

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- I. Obvious theme of today's readings is *forgiveness* (Sir 27:30-28:7; Mt 18:21-35).
 - A. Jesus talks about a theme from the Hebrew Scriptures and takes it to a deeper level.
 1. If you want to be forgiven, you must forgive others.
 2. Peter, always eager to do the right thing, asks how many times he must forgive.
 3. Jesus says 77 times (or 70 times 7 in some translations).
 - a. Seven is a complete number, God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, making up a full week.
 - b. The number is not a numerical limit, but an expression of completeness.
 - c. In other words: ALWAYS!
 - B. This also works the other way: when we know what it means to be forgiven, we should be more willing to forgive others.
 1. Think of times you have said something you regretted.
 2. You are relieved when you apologize and the offended person forgives you.
 3. This should help us to be compassionate if we are on the receiving end of an insult and the person apologizes to us.
- II. This theme of forgiveness is a good opportunity for us to think about the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - A. Blessed Isaac of Stella, abbot: "The Church is incapable of forgiving any sin without Christ, and Christ is unwilling to forgive any sin without the Church. The Church cannot forgive the sin of one who has not repented, who has not been touched by Christ; Christ will not forgive the sin of one who despises the Church."

- B. Confession times at the Cathedral.
 - C. I don't know about other priests, but I get sacramental amnesia, that is, I don't remember people's sins!
 - D. Our priests are very compassionate and merciful.
 - E. Confessing our sins does help lift a burden from our shoulders, but more important is to hear the words of absolution and know that God has forgiven our sins.
- III. Just as Christ forgives our sins through the Church, He makes Himself presence to us through the Church in His gift of the Eucharist.
- IV. May God give us this grace. Amen.