

# **The Journey of Forgiveness**

By Sr. Miriam James Heidland and Fr. John Burns

## **Uncovering the Wound**

In your prayer, retell the story of when you were hurt.

Pay close attention to the details and your reaction to them.

Do you feel pain, sorrow, anger, resentment? How intensely?

How do these emotions affect your daily life?

How do you think about the person who hurt you?

## **Choosing a Different Way**

Very likely, the one who hurt you can't give back what they took.

Insisting that they do so traps you in your negative emotions.

Can you acknowledge that you have tried, but you cannot make yourself well? Are you willing to let go of the debt, rather than demand repayment? If so, ask the Lord to help you forgive.

## **Working on Forgiveness**

In prayer, behold the life story of the person who hurt you.

What was their life like growing up? When they hurt you? Ask God to show you how He sees their story. Can you see them as another person, someone who also carries pain? Ask for the gifts of understanding and compassion. Can you offer them a gift, an act of mercy?

If so, pray the Prayer of Forgiveness (to the right).

## **Embracing Freedom**

Notice the change as you move from demanding to forgiving. Invite Christ to show you the meaning of your suffering, which has led you to forgiveness. Offer back to Him any remaining pain; offer it for the one who hurt you, if you can. Compare the darkness of the wound to the light of forgiving. Resolve to live this way of goodness and bring light to others who are in darkness. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you always on this way.

## **Prayer of Forgiveness**

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you whom you need to forgive (could be family, a friend, an abuser, God, yourself).
2. Picture the person in front of you and pay attention to what you feel in your heart and body.
3. Make an account of the debt they owe you. (What did they take from you? How did they hurt you? It is okay to feel angry or nothing at all).
4. Imagine yourself telling them what they did to hurt you and how it has affected you.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any identity lies you believe about yourself based on that incident.
6. Renounce the identity lie: "In the name of Jesus Christ, I renounce the lie that \_\_\_\_\_." (Ex: I am not loved or cared for, that I have to perform well to be loved, I am forgotten, etc.)
7. Announce the truth of your identity in Christ: "In the name of Jesus Christ, I announce the truth that I am seen, that I am valuable, that I am loved, etc..."
8. Bring the person with you to meet Jesus on the cross at Calvary and look at His face of care and mercy.
9. Ask Jesus to forgive the person.
10. Ask Jesus to give you the grace to forgive the person.
11. Pray a prayer of blessing for that person. Ask God to bless them and heal them on their journey.
12. Ask Jesus to seal this forgiveness and heal the wounds in your life.