

Fr Ben's Weekly Reflection

24th Sunday Ordinary Time

Sep 13, 2026

Library Books

My siblings and I checked out a lot of books from the library as kids. Stopping by the library was a regular thing. Mom instilled in us that we take care of library books since they are not ours. Thinking back, it's kind of funny how often times, those library books would be more beat up than our own books. Honestly, to replace a "damaged" library book would probably be an upgrade to the quality of some books. Yet we treated them like new since they were *library* books. They almost had an extra layer of reverence and respect.

If we treat books that may cost $20 to replace with such reverence, why can't we do that with people? We are **all** "banged up library books" that God finds invaluable as Jesus explains in his parable. God, the King in the parable, sees the huge debt of Original Sin we owe. Yet despite that, He forgives it no questions asked through Baptism. He doesn't want to replace us with something better.

And yet…that's how He sees each person. But in our fallen nature, we go out and treat others worse than dirt at times. Peter's initial question is on forgiveness. How often in our own pride do we hold everything against someone else? "It's all his fault." "I'm not forgiving her until she says she's sorry." "Remember what you did in 1980??"

Sometimes, it's legitimate. Sometimes we have been wronged. Sometimes the other person is placing unrealistic blame on us for problems in their own life. I'm not talking about those situations.

I'm talking about the situations we can control and ask forgiveness for and forgive. We need to say, "I honestly need to get over myself." This is one of the biggest challenges in small town and small-town parish life. Everyone knows everyone and things that happened 10, 20, 30 years ago take on a life of their own. How can we treat others poorly through gossip, slander, not forgiving, and then say we are good Christians?

Saint Paul is constantly hitting back on this same topic in the early Church communities. Jesus stresses that forgiveness is seventy times seven! That's 490 for those doing math. But in Scriptural terms, 7 is the number of perfection. So, 70 times 7 is infinite perfection multiplied.

We must forgive our brother and or our sister from our heart. "But I'm struggling to forgive." Good! It takes time and forgiveness is healing. Not everyone will receive it well, but Jesus didn't say, "forgive only if you know the other person will say I'm sorry." If you have been holding on to something, this Gospel is the reminder to let it go. Forgiveness is the way Christ commands and lived Himself on the cross.