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Fr. Danny Murphy Fourth Sunday of Advent – 2015

Vero Beach, Holy Cross Catholic Church

"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas..." The song makes me wonder why every day can't be like the joy that is Christmas. Perhaps, if we ponder what I call my own "Ten Commandments of Forgiveness", then everyday might resemble Christmas Day in some fashion.

- 1: Forgiveness is not easy – it takes time. There is no "cheap grace" If forgiveness was easy, it would not be real especially for the deep betrayals and hurts. Because of this, we need to ask God to help us forgive.
- 2: Forgiveness is NOT forgetting. We often say: "forgive and forget, but when the wounds are deep and fresh we often cannot forget it. (and perhaps remember not to pass the same kind of hurt onto others).
- 3: Forgiveness is a decision, NOT a feeling. We may not feel affection for the person who caused the hurt, but we can decide to forgive.
- 4: Forgiveness is not indifference. If the hurt is deep we don't go back to "business as usual", but we try to make sure that the wrongs do not recur.

5: Forgiveness is not approval. We can, at the same time, forgive but also express our disapproval over what happened.

The last five are more positive...

6: When we forgive, we should try to recognize that the person who hurt me is more than what he/she did to hurt me. The person is not simply the person with faults who causes wrong doings.

7: To forgive is to give the person another chance to start all over again. There is, of course the temptation to say: "I'll never have anything to do with that person ever again." Jesus would not say that!

8: Forgiveness is recognizing the humanity of the person who hurt me. I should recognize my own humanity as well. I too have the capability of hurting others. Perhaps I might have contributed to what went wrong?

9: I must surrender my right to get even!

10: For the person who hurt me, I should wish them well, and pray for them.

If we were to keep the "Ten Commandments of Forgiveness", every day could be just like Christmas...

...and what a wonderful world this would be!