

Forgiveness

Opening words and Chalice lighting:

We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Welcome and check-in (A time to share what is on your mind in order to clear it and be in the present.)

Reading for discussion

The practice of forgiveness is not simply a one-time action or an isolated feeling or thought. Forgiveness involves us in a whole way of life that is shaped by an ever-deepening friendship with God and with other people. The central goal of this practice is to reconcile, to restore communion - with God, with one another, and with the whole creation.

Forgiveness works through our ongoing willingness to give up certain claims against one another, to give the truth when we access our relationships with one another, and to give gifts of ourselves by making innovative gestures that offer a future not bound by the past.

Dr. Greg Jones, a Christian ethicist and Dean of the School of Divinity at Duke University

Questions for discussion

What do you remember of situations where forgiveness did not happen? How does your experience color your notion of forgiveness in general?

Anger is a sign that something needs to change. When might bitterness and hatred seem justified? When might anger lead to appropriate resistance and insistent action for change? What is the danger even in righteous indignation?

We need to unlearn those things that divide and destroy communion, and instead learn to live as forgiven and forgiving people. How do people who have experienced forgiveness react when others make mistakes? When have you seen vengeance averted in creative ways? How can we avoid reproducing violence, and still take seriously people's responsibilities for their actions?

Check-out (A time to share likes and wishes, such as "I like how we..." "I wish we would...", or express how you felt about the group.)

Closing words and extinguishing the Chalice:

Forgiveness is choosing to love. It is the first skill of self-giving love.

Mohandas K. Gandhi

Thanks to everyone for their participation and commitment to our group!