**Tuesday 26th May**

Matthew 6: 12

And forgive us our debts,
    as we also have forgiven our debtors.

We live in a blame culture. It is really clear to see, even in the midst of this pandemic. Everyone is looking for someone to blame. We find it easy to see fault in others. But the Gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us that the way to freedom and wholeness is to recognise our own mess, our inability to do anything about it, and to bring it to God in repentance. Repentance isn’t a word that is used very commonly now, but it means to change your mind or go turn around.  When we turn to face God again, we find His arms wide open to offer us full and free forgiveness! He gave His Son so that we might be rid of all the stuff that leads to a slow death, and instead experience life in all its fullness for eternity! Come on! That is amazing! If you have never done this, come to Jesus today. Ask Him for His forgiveness, and His grace to live for Him from now on. Give Him your life, and He will give you His in return!

For some of us, it is forgiving others that has become a stumbling block. The Lord asks us to forgive others, because of all that we have been forgiven. If I give my daughters a bag of sweets, I want them to be free to be generous with them because of the generosity that they have received. Forgiving others does not mean that what they have done doesn’t matter. It means that I am giving up my right to get even – I am releasing them from debt and leaving that situation in God’s hands. God asks us to forgive because He wants us to be free. We cannot be free if there is unforgiveness within us. But even here there is good news – we can ask God for the grace to be able to forgive. It is not natural to forgive – it is supernatural – and we need the grace of God to be able to do it.

*Father, thank you for the incredible gift of forgiveness that you offer us in Jesus! Thank you Lord, that because of Jesus death and resurrection I go free! Thank you that you have dealt with every wrong thing that I have ever thought, said or done! Thank you that my past no longer defines me, but that I have a new future in you. Help me to live in the fullness of all that you have won for me!*

*In this time of lockdown, would you continue to search my heart, and show me if there is any ongoing attitude or addiction that you want to deal with. Would you perform heart surgery? Lord, please show me if I am harbouring unforgiveness in my heart. And I pray for your grace to be able to leave that person and situation with you. Thank you for the freedom that you offer. Amen*

