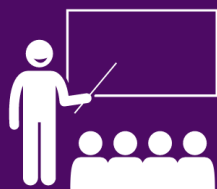




DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

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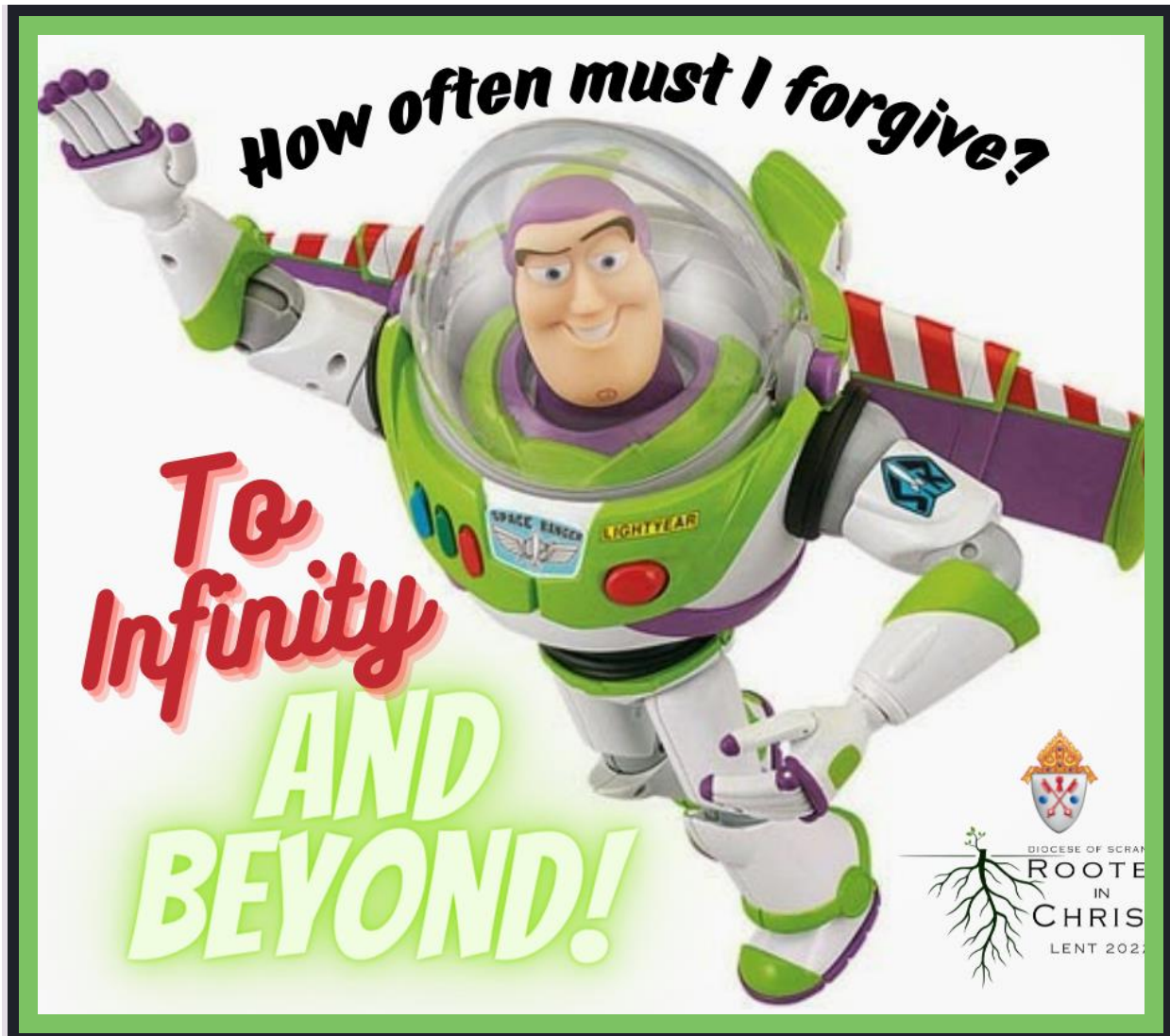
TEACHING *Tuesday*

A Math Lesson in Forgiveness

In the [Gospel for today](#), Jesus teaches his disciples about forgiveness through numbers:

Peter approached Jesus and asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times." (Mt 18:21).

Some biblical scholars translate Jesus's answer not as seventy-seven but as "seventy *times* seven." Jesus is not trying to give us a mathematical formula for offering forgiveness, but instead is trying to make the point that our forgiveness should go to ∞ . (get it?)



When I was in college, I struggled for a few years with forgiving someone that hurt me, and my best friend was a great listening ear. One day after talking with him for the millionth time about my struggle and telling him that I wish I could have some closure to the situation, my friend stood up, walked over to the door, opened it, and then invited me to close it. Perplexed, I got up and did as he had asked. He said, "You see? You have the ability to close the door to the situation. You just need to forgive and let it go."

My friend was right. Sometimes we let the wrongs of other people live rent-free inside our heads when we have the ability to close the door on them. We know that forgiveness is not easy, and even forgiveness does not take away the pain we experience from a wrong, but grudges are useless and a

complete waste of time and energy. They restrain and eat away at the person holding them, and most likely have little to no impact on the person who wronged us. Forgiving others is not just a kind deed mentioned by Jesus in today's Gospel, but words we say every time we pray the Lord's Prayer: "...and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Thank goodness God does not dole out his mercy based to our own capacity to forgive, otherwise we'd all be in trouble!

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Today, think about the grudges that you may be holding on to or the people you have yet to forgive. Ask God for the grace and courage to "close the door" on your grudge, to let God's grace and freedom fill that space in your

life. Consider reaching out to the person who wronged you to let them know that you forgive them, that you're thinking about them, or that you wish them well.



Watch this clip from *The Shack* which looks at forgiveness. Be aware of the ways you have struggled to forgive, and ask God to help you let go of old hurts.



David Baloga is the Director for Worship in the Office of Parish Life. He has worked in several parishes in the Diocese of Scranton as the Director of Music and Worship and Coordinator of the RCIA, and also currently serves as the part-time Director of Music at Immaculate Conception Parish in Scranton. Dave has a great passion for the sacred liturgy, musical theatre, Notre Dame, and the Boston Red Sox. He currently resides in Shavertown with his wife, Laura, and two daughters, Alison and Emily.

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