



DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

ROOTED IN CHRIST

LENT 2022



FORGIVING *Friday*

IN DIFFICULT MOMENT I WILL FIX MY GAZE
UPON THE SILENT HEART OF JESUS.
STRETCHED UPON THE CROSS. AND FROM THE
EXPLODING FLAMES OF HIS MERCIFUL HEART
WILL FLOW DOWN UPON ME POWER AND
STRENGTH TO KEEP FIGHTING
st. Faustina



God is All Forgiving

"I am sorry." Are these not the toughest words to say? Are they not the most difficult words to accept? And yet, we are more than capable of giving them and receiving them. In the mystery of creation, God placed in our hearts the capacity to offend and to ask for forgiveness. Only man can offend and only man can forgive.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. (Isaiah 1:18)

Forgiveness is a hard but necessary place to arrive at, but for me, once I learned how to properly forgive and once I forgave the most difficult injustice, forgiving mere mortals was easy. You see, I had to forgive God, for what I thought was a complete abandonment when

my marriage ended. I lost or maybe gave up on all of the hopes that are hoped for when you decide that a life like that is for you, retirements and grandkids, and growing old beside each other, intact families that didn't need to deal with bonus-moms or dads and who gets the kids on which holiday. Now my children were resigned to two homes and two Christmases, Easters, birthdays, parent conferences, graduation parties, etc.? Is that what my life now looked like? And what about the promises we made to each other and to God, himself? Was I supposed to forget about them, get an annulment and pretend that the last 15 or so years never happened?

Where were you, God, in the storm?

That's when I asked: "Where were you, God, in the storm? In MY storm?" I wanted the happily ever after just as much as the next guy. While I was wading in the aftermath of my broken marriage, of the dream I could never recover, the loss for my children, lost friendships, lost family ties, loss of trust in myself and worse yet in God, I dared to ask Him, "Where were You?" Who asks the most high God, the reverent source of all that is, to account for His whereabouts while you've been suffering? Who begs to know why He didn't interrupt or deter the storm? Apparently me. I do. My unappreciative, defiant battle cry was, "Where were you when I needed you? Why didn't you stop this from coming?" Selfish, I know, but I needed an answer.

In the deafening silence, in the stillness, in my tender-heartedness, in my resignation that maybe the world was too broken to be beautiful, there is where I heard the small, still voice.

But it didn't come in a church and it didn't come when I was on my knees. It came when I was running. It was the rustle of leaves, a little tornado right before me. It was the iridescent snowfall just as I set out in the early dusk. It was the dewy droplets of rain landing on me on a perfectly sunny day. It was the lyrics that filtered into my ear and percolated an entire song out of nothingness. It was there, as if to say, *I am here. I have been here. I will always be here. No harm can come to you. Nothing too great will ever overtake you or separate you from me. I will weather every storm with you and I will never leave you. So let it rain and let it storm. I will renew you over and over again. You are mine.*

It was there that I learned who my God was and forgave my mistrust of Him. It was there that I learned He had never abandoned me and He never would. It sounds easy now. It even feels easy now, but rest assured, my faith was hard won. And though I still am tempted to question why, I no longer do, and I never question where He is. That answer rests quietly in my soul. Now I see His handiwork in all things and now I am grateful. The wreckage was grace. There was purpose in my pain and a redemption in my redirection.



Christina Lenway is a mother of three beautiful children and a singer/songwriter. She is a lifelong educator, having taught for nearly 30 years and is currently a full-time staff member at the University of Scranton.

Here is a link to the song that Christina was inspired to write about forgiveness [Click here](#)

FOR REFLECTION

Have you ever felt like God had abandoned you when you needed Him most? Were you able to forgive that feeling of abandonment?

How do you forgive in marriage? How do you forgive when your marriage has failed?

What is the relationship between love and forgiveness?

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