

## ***MOURNING OUR LOSSES FORGIVING THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US***

*Remarriage is born out of loss for one or both partners. Accepting, understanding and supporting the ongoing need to mourn and forgive will be key to individual and marital well-being. Children will experience loss and grief when a parent remarries.*

### **Grief**

- ❖ Is a natural response to loss
- ❖ American society gives little permission or support to those in grief
- ❖ Is triggered by events that recall/remind one of loss. Especially occurs around anniversaries, holidays and life-cycle events.
- ❖ Transforms us. We do not “get over” significant losses. We change as we continue to grieve.
- ❖ Is processed better by sharing/expressing it with someone who is safe and cares about us.

### **Spouses help each other (and their children) grieve by:**

- ❖ Offering acceptance and understanding when the other is experiencing loss and grief.
- ❖ Listening to the stories and feelings of loss
- ❖ Crying together; talking together; being present => mourning is sharing grief.
- ❖ Offering words of comfort
- ❖ Giving space to grieve
- ❖ Not being threatened or anxious by the grief of the other
- ❖ Sharing rituals that honor the deceased. (Going to the cemetery, placing a wreath, praying together, remembering at holidays.)
- ❖ Honor the love and good that may have preceded divorce (or death).
- ❖ Telling children they may feel sad at your wedding (loss of previous parent or marriage) and reassuring them that this is OK.

God’s grace + love + time brings healing.

Seek the help of a professional if grief remains unresolved or is causing depression, anxiety or other problems.

### **FORGIVENESS IS:**

- ❖ A divine gift and fact. God forgives us our faults. Christ died for our sins.
- ❖ Commanded by Christ. “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”
- ❖ Helps the forgiver first by setting them free of hurt, hatred and resentment.
- ❖ an ongoing process. “Forgive seventy times seven times.”
- ❖ a free gift by the forgiver....does not have to be earned or merited.
- ❖ giving up my right to condemn and get even. (Exonerating)
- ❖ a decision first. Feelings of forgiveness may follow.
- ❖ Facilitated by praying for the offender. “Pray for your persecutors.”

- ❖ Sometimes necessary to forgive ourselves or God
- ❖ Sometimes we need to apologize and ask for forgiveness.
- ❖ The Sacrament of Reconciliation helps us to both ask for forgiveness and to forgive the wrongs done to us.
- ❖ not excusing bad behavior or giving permission to harm us again.
- ❖ Does not always lead to reconciliation.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. Do I have resentments or an unforgiving heart towards anyone? Who?
2. Am I willing to ask God's help in forgiving?
3. Will I pray for them?
4. Do I need to ask for forgiveness?
5. Do I need to accept forgiveness that has been offered?
6. Do I need to forgive myself?
7. Is my lack of forgiveness blocking my spiritual life?
8. When was the last time I went to Confession?
9. Do I encourage/support my spouse in their work of forgiveness? Would I rather judge, condemn, hold resentments toward a common enemy?
10. Does my anger, resentment, unforgiveness harm the relationship between my children and their other parent (my ex?)