



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO/PRINCIPAL

As virtues go, *forgiveness* can be pretty tough. That is at least, if we contemplate its meaning literally; in very human and concrete terms. Speak to the women and children who are victims of domestic violence or the family and friends of the victims of recent terror attacks and ask them their understanding of forgiveness. I am sure, understandably, they would find it difficult if not impossible to extend our human understanding of *forgiveness* to those responsible for the grief and loss they are now experiencing. But perhaps that is not what God seeks as a response from those people in that circumstance. Perhaps it has never been intended that we generate a *non-human* response in the starkness of a *human* experience? Even on the cross, the human Jesus sought the intercession of his Father to forgive those who were persecuting him.

So much of the horror, grief and sadness we experience in our world today appears to demand a capacity or willingness to forgive that is beyond what we, as fragile humans, are actually capable of. Maybe that's not something we should regard as a failing? Perhaps the call to *forgiveness* has more to do with reconciling within *ourselves* the limitations and failings we bring to relationships that compromise them and risk diminishing a community that might otherwise be considered as patient, tolerant, kind and respectful. Perhaps the first priority in the pursuit of forgiveness is to be kinder, less judgemental and certainly less demanding of *ourselves* and our own failings. In this way we might be freer to extend that *grace* to others and thereby enhance the likelihood of building community and bringing about God's kingdom. The spiritual writer Daniel O'Leary reflects it in this way:

"No matter how well you look, how fine your words and deeds may be, when your heart is angry, bitter or fearful, that is what those around you will catch off you. People will feel the jealousy, the desire for revenge from you, even though you try to hide these destructive emotions. Because such thoughts can be toxic they damage the hearts of others. But first they poison your own soul. What you do not transform you transmit. You prepare for the journey to a happier life by nourishing your heart with truth, beauty and love, by filling your soul with forgiveness and letting go, by choosing to become the authentic person you were created to be. Then those you meet will catch off you, not fear, but energy; not darkness, but a special kind of light. Test this out, notice when it happens."

**Best wishes, Tony Fitzgerald**