

Chapter 13

Answer Key for Double-Check Questions

1. *Why is it so important that we ask for God's forgiveness of our sins?*

We must seek God's forgiveness of our sins because only then will we find the healing we need to repair the damage to heart and soul that our sin has caused.

2. *Give two examples from the Gospels in which Jesus teaches about the importance of forgiving those who have sinned against us.*

(The students may give a range of suitable examples from the Gospels. Some are listed in article 53.)

3. *How must we ask God's forgiveness for mortal sins?*

When we have committed a mortal sin, we must ask God's forgiveness first in our private prayer and then through participation in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation as soon as possible. In this sacrament, we must confess our sin and receive absolution. This is the sure way to reconcile with God and the Church.

4. *What are some things to keep in mind when seeking forgiveness from other people?*

When we seek forgiveness from other people, we try to repair the harm caused by our sin and grow in moral virtue. We should try to express our sorrow as soon as possible. We are called to exercise prudence and humility to convey sincerity and be as positive as possible. We can seek advice from a trusted friend or adviser about how best to seek forgiveness from someone we have harmed. We may also need to make concrete reparation—perhaps after asking the other person how we might compensate for our offense.

5. *What is the potential effect on ourselves when we fail to forgive others? What is the potential effect on ourselves when we extend forgiveness to others?*

Forgiving others is critical to our well-being. It is especially crucial to our spiritual well-being, because holding onto resentment damages our relationship with God, preventing us from being in full communion with him. Refusing to forgive can also damage our physical and emotional well-being, because we continue to suffer. In contrast, when we extend forgiveness, we make a deliberate choice not to suffer anymore, and we open up to the forgiving love that God extends to all of us, including ourselves.

6. *What are some things people can do to start the process of forgiveness?*

We can do a variety of things to move forward and forgive someone who has hurt us. We can remember that we are beloved children of God, not victims to be controlled by someone who has hurt us. We can allow ourselves to feel the pain of being hurt because refusing to acknowledge the harm can prevent us from eventually forgiving it. We can make a deliberate decision to forgive; we do not need to wait until we stop hurting. Finally, we do not need to wait for the person to change or to ask for forgiveness—instead, we can ask for the Holy Spirit's grace to make us willing to forgive.

