

WHEN TO FORGIVE

by Avery Cardinal Dulles

In his contribution to a recent volume on forgiveness, Martin Marty hazards the opinion that if there were a single word that expressed the very heart of the Christian message, it might well be ‘forgiveness.’ Christians, he says, are called to experience both forgiveness from God and forgiveness among fellow human beings inspired by that divine forgiveness. Marty goes on to observe that forgiveness is not an exclusively Christian concept. It figures prominently in many other religions and, indeed, functions beyond every religious context.¹

Pope John Paul II made forgiveness one of the pillars of his program for the Church and the world. In an encyclical of 1980 on Divine Mercy, he wrote: ‘The Church rightly considers it her duty to guard the authenticity of forgiveness, both in life and behavior and in educational and pastoral work. She protects it simply by guarding its source, which is the mystery of the mercy of God himself as revealed in Jesus Christ.’² In his pastoral care for the Church, this Pope has spared no effort to revivify the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation as the ordinary means by which sin is forgiven in the Church. Forgiveness is also a cornerstone of his strategy for ecumenism and interreligious relations. During the Great Jubilee of 2000 he pleaded with some success for the forgiveness of international debts. Finally, he regards forgiveness as a necessary means for achieving and preserving civil peace within and between nations. The supreme instance of forgiveness, for Christians, is the Redemption. Sin has alienated the whole human race from God. We are worthy of condemnation. But in Jesus Christ God shows forth his mercy; he forgives our debts to him. This act of forgiveness, like all such acts, is costly. The Cross of Christ teaches us that God does not forgive unexpiated sin. Forgiveness does not mean pretending that evil does not exist or forgetting it, but remembering it, facing its full malice, regretting it, and atoning for it.

I

While regularly praising forgiveness, Christians are generally confused about its meaning and application. In the title of this lecture I ask: when to forgive? The question, in its full extension, might be rephrased by asking who should forgive, who should be forgiven, and under what circumstances? The answer has to be somewhat complex because of the variety of concepts contained under the rubric of forgiveness. The dictionaries generally recognize two dimensions. Forgiveness, they tell us, means the renunciation both of resentment and of claims to requital. Each of the two terms, 'resentment' and 'requital,' calls for distinctions.

The necessary distinctions were lucidly set forth by the Anglican Bishop Joseph Butler in his sermons on resentment and forgiveness delivered early in the eighteenth century.³ In my analysis I shall be guided in part by his. The first term, 'resentment,' applies to three kinds of emotional reaction in the presence of evil: impulsive anger, deliberate malice, and moral indignation.

The sudden passion of anger is, in itself, morally neutral. God has implanted in human nature an instinct to react adversely to threats of harm or destruction. Since this impulse is spontaneous and beneficial for self-preservation and self-defense, it is not evil in itself. But it is dangerous because, unless controlled, it is capable of turning into malice.

The second form of resentment, deliberate malice, is morally wrong. Christ in the Gospel requires us to overcome the temptation to return evil for evil. He exhorts us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Mt 5:44). He gave an example of love of enemies in praying to his Father to forgive those who were crucifying him (Lk 23:34). Forgiveness, in the sense of renouncing hatred and overcoming personal anger, is a Christian imperative.

Resentment can, in the third place, be morally good. We ought to be indignant when we witness unjust and cruel behavior. Although Jesus was never malicious toward his enemies, he displayed righteous anger toward the Pharisees because they were distorting God's law and misleading their followers. He also showed indignation when he overturned the tables of the money changers in the Temple and drove out the merchants with a whip. By his example he made it clear that his disciples are not always obliged to forgive. As we shall see, there are conditions for forgiveness.

In addition to the forswearing of resentment, forgiveness has a second aspect, the renunciation of requital. This aspect concerns not the sentiments of the forgiver but the behavior expected of the other party. The renunciation takes either of two forms. In its first form it means the remission, in whole or in part, of a claim to reparations for an injustice or to payment of a debt. Although borrowing is not a sin, Jesus in the Gospels frequently uses it as an analogy for guilt, which is a kind of debt toward God. He says that unless we treat our debtors generously, God will not forgive our debts, our sins.

The Gospel precepts and parables have to be correctly understood. Just as God has a right to demand reparation for past sin, so creditors, likewise, have a right to insist on full payment if the debtor is in a position to pay. There is no general obligation to forgive debts. But when the debtor is in difficulty, and truly wants to pay, the creditor ought to show mercy by granting a delay, a reduction of the amount, or outright cancellation. The same is true of reparation or compensation for harm that is not financial, such as insult or bodily injury. We may, and sometimes should, give up the claim to personal compensation. Love for the other party may oblige us to do so. In its second form the forswearing of requital may be the act of an authority mitigating or cancelling due punishment. Parents, while exercising authority over their children, should always be available to them with tender love and compassion. They must be disposed to forgive, but not to dispense with repentance. When punishment is exacted, it should be administered as an act of love, so that the children, making amends for their misdeeds, may learn to behave better in the future.

The State, which is responsible for public order, is obliged to punish criminals for the sake of redressing offenses against the common good, rehabilitating the criminal, and protecting society against new violence. The pardoning of criminals, therefore, is the exception, not the rule. Normally it presupposes that the purposes of punishment have already been fulfilled and that clemency will bring tangible social benefits. In relatively rare cases, heads of State grant pardon and amnesty because it would simply be too expensive or impractical to administer due punishment.

When public authority fails to act, people are sometimes tempted to take the law into their own hands and inflict what they regard as due punishment. This system of vigilante justice has often led to grave social disorders. It is not a proper substitute for the rule of law. On the basis of this analysis we may distinguish at least four types of forgiveness. As a matter of sentiment

it can mean either the suspension of personal animosity or of moral indignation toward others; as a matter of conduct, it can mean release either from indebtedness or from punishment. General statements about forgiveness must take account of all these dimensions. If forgiveness were simply the opposite of malice or vengefulness, the theory would be relatively simple. Since these attitudes are always forbidden, forgiveness would always be required. But the problem is more complex. It involves questions about when to renounce moral indignation, forceful resistance, the exaction of just compensation, and the imposition of just penalties.

II

With these concepts of forgiveness in mind we may now turn to the central questions: who may forgive, who may be forgiven, and under what conditions?

In most cases the party who forgives is the one who has suffered injury, or to whom a debt is due. In cases where the injured party is deceased or unable to act, another party, such as a family member, may represent the victim or creditor whether in forswearing resentment or in remitting a debt. Where an offense is made against public order, the bearers of public office are the proper persons to impose or remit a just penalty. For the time being, I transmit the question of forgiveness between groups, because I intend to touch on it later.

The recipient of forgiveness is the person who has committed an offense or incurred a debt. Forgiveness for injuries can extend beyond the perpetrator to those who encouraged or culpably failed to prevent them. Relatives or compatriots are likely to share the moral attitudes of the offenders, imitating and defending their conduct. The Old Testament vividly expresses the idea of solidarity in guilt when it speaks of the iniquities of the fathers being visited on the children (Ex 20:5, etc.).

No one has a strict right to forgiveness. The prospect of easy or automatic forgiveness could in fact give aid and comfort to aggressors and thus promote injustice. Well-ordered love may require that aggressors be resisted and punished rather than appeased. In particular cases, to be sure, a seemingly uncalled-for act of forgiveness, as a dramatic demonstration of love, may anticipate and bring about the adversary's conversion. But apart from these exceptions, forgiveness ordinarily presupposes certain conditions in the person being forgiven.

III

The usual conditions of forgiveness are three: that the person receiving it be sorry for any wrong committed, be resolved to desist from continuing or repeating the evil action, and be prepared to make satisfaction, as far as possible. To be disposed for forgiveness one need not expect to avoid future misdeeds, but one must be resolved to take effective measures to prevent such acts. A habitual sex offender, for example, ought not to receive absolution without intending to avoid situations in which the recurrence of such sins is likely.

These conditions would seem to be required even by God, so far as we can judge from Scripture. When Israel experiences God's wrath in the Old Testament, she stands in fear of divine punishment. The people confess their sins, beg for mercy, do penance, and resolve to keep God's law in the future. By these means they seek to dispose themselves for God's forgiveness, should he be pleased to grant it. It is sometimes thought that these conditions were swept away by the great revelation of God's mercy in the New Testament. If so, Christianity could be a source of danger to morality and justice. W. H. Auden, in his Christmas Oratorio, *For the Time Being*, places this objection on the lips of the tyrant Herod. After the visit of the Magi, Herod voices the fear:

Justice will be replaced by Pity as the cardinal human virtue, and all fear of retribution will vanish. Every corner-boy will congratulate himself: 'I'm such a sinner that God had to come down in person to save me. I must be a devil of a fellow.' Every crook will argue: 'I like committing crime. God likes forgiving them. Really the world is admirably arranged.'⁴

The idea that Christianity enthrones forgiveness in place of justice and teaches universal forgiveness is a gross misunderstanding. Jesus, like John the Baptist, in fact warns his hearers to take measures to escape the punishment they deserve. They must pray for pardon, as we regularly do in the Lord's Prayer. But prayer is only one of several prerequisites. Even while insisting on the imperative to forgive, Jesus mentions admonition and repentance: 'If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive him' (Lk 17:3-4). In his parables Jesus alludes to reparation as well as repentance. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, for instance, the younger son resolves to tell his father: 'I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be

called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants' (Lk 15:19). Again, in the parable of the unforgiving servant, the servant pleads with his master: 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything' (Mt 18:26).

The story of Zaccheus in Luke's Gospel provided Pope John Paul II with material for a very timely instruction on the sacrament of penance in his 2002 Holy Thursday letter to priests.⁵ Zaccheus is moved to exclaim: 'Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.' At that Jesus replies: 'Today salvation has come to this house' (Lk 19:8-9). Zaccheus does not receive forgiveness until he has resolved to compensate those he had defrauded and to be generous toward the poor.

Jesus frequently mentions one additional condition: that persons who seek forgiveness from God must forgive those who trespass against them, as we say in the Lord's Prayer. 'If you do not forgive men their trespasses,' says Jesus, 'neither will your Father forgive your trespasses' (Mt 6:15; cf. 18:35, etc.).

Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New, therefore, is it taught that forgiveness takes the place of justice, or that God always forgives sins, or that we ought to forgive everyone all the time. Pope John Paul II insists on these objective requirements. 'In no passage of the Gospel message,' he writes, 'does forgiveness, or mercy as its source, mean indulgence toward evil, toward scandals, toward injury or insult. In any case, reparation for evil and scandal, compensation for injury, and satisfaction for insult are conditions for forgiveness.'⁶

An objection can be raised from the New Testament itself against the doctrine of forgiveness here proposed. In a passage mentioned above, Jesus is reported as pleading from the Cross for his executioners: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' (Lk 23:34). Although this verse is lacking in many ancient codices, we may treat it as probably authentic.⁷ Since Jesus here speaks of forgiveness, we must assume that he is judging his executioners to be guilty, even though partly excusable. Yet he makes no reference to remorse or reparation as prerequisites. Is it significant that, instead of directly forgiving his enemies, he appeals to the Father to do so? Jesus may well be supposing that the process of forgiveness that he is initiating will not become complete until the malefactors repented. If so, the text poses no difficulty against the theory of forgiveness for which I am arguing.

Christ gave the Church the mission to forgive sins in his name. After his resurrection he tells the Apostles: 'If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven' (Jn 20:23). In his final appearance to the Eleven, as recounted by Luke, he sends them forth with the commission 'that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations' (Lk 24:47). They are not to proclaim forgiveness to the unrepentant, but are to call their hearers to repentance with a view to the remission of sins.

The Church has taken this commission seriously. She understands the forgiveness of sins to be a sacred rite, a sacrament, an encounter with the living Christ, who uses the Church as an instrument of reconciliation. As conditions for the worthy reception of the sacrament by the baptized, the Church specifies these four: sorrow for past sin, integral confession, a firm purpose of amendment, and willingness to make satisfaction. Satisfaction, in the case of injustice toward others, includes restitution. These conditions seem to me to be in perfect accord with the teaching of Jesus as we know it from the Gospels.

IV

Before taking up the social and political aspects of forgiveness, we should consider, even though briefly, the burdens and benefits. Forgiveness is obviously burdensome to the person who forgives, because it involves a renunciation of feelings of resentment, warranted or unwarranted, and of claims to compensation, which is, or is thought to be, due. It is by no means easy to give up feelings of hostility toward those who have offended us, or to exact less by way of satisfaction than we are entitled to receive.

Forgiveness can also be burdensome to those who receive it. They may find it humiliating to acknowledge their indebtedness, to accept pardon from their former enemies, and to be dispensed from the ordinary requirements of just behavior. Perhaps they do not want to enjoy benefits they did not earn. In *Paradise Lost* Satan positively resists reconciliation. Acknowledging that he has been defeated in battle, he still clings to his hostile passions; 'the unconquerable will, study of revenge, immortal hate, and courage never to submit or yield.'⁸ Such dispositions, harbored in the soul, arm it against accepting pardon, even though it be tendered.

The burdens of forgiveness, however, are generally outweighed by its benefits. The recipient is liberated from the hostility of the person offended and from a burden of debt or punishment. According to the type of forgiveness in question, the enemy is restored to friendship, the guilty to innocence, the debtor to solvency, and the prisoner to freedom.

What is less obvious, but no less real, is the benefit accruing to the person who forgives. As Shakespeare profoundly observed in Portia's famous speech, mercy brings blessings upon 'him that gives and him that takes.'⁹ The giver is blessed by being relieved of the anger that rankles in the heart and of preoccupation with obtaining redress. These benefits, however, are elusive because, as I have said, forgiveness is difficult. An outward profession of forgiveness without sincere good will accomplishes nothing for the person who bestows it. Likewise unavailing is the repression of angry feelings. Driven underground, resentment asserts itself in depression and in psychosomatic illnesses.

Jesus in the Gospels calls for 'forgiveness from your heart' (Mt 18:35). To achieve genuine good will toward those who have hurt us demands great spiritual strength, inner freedom, and in some cases, religious faith. To be able to say in all sincerity to the repentant murderer of a loved one, 'I forgive you,' would be almost impossible without religious motivation. But Christians, believing as they do that God sacrificed his own Son to forgive them, sometimes find the strength to say, 'I forgive you because I am a Christian.'

Beyond the proximate benefits just mentioned, forgiveness may lead to reconciliation. Where grievances exist on both sides, reconciliation presupposes mutual offerings of pardon mutually accepted. Once reconciled, enemies become friends and fellow-members of a new and larger community.

St. Paul sums up the whole mission of Christ under the heading of reconciliation. Through Christ, he says, God 'reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation' (2 Cor 5:18). Christ died, he says, in order to reconcile the world to God, 'making peace by the blood of his cross' (Col 1:20). Through Christ people who have been divided by enmity receive the possibility of being joined in friendship. In asserting this, Paul is thinking especially of the endemic hostility between Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:14-16).

V

These reflections of Paul raise what will be our final question. What are the social and political implications of the Christian doctrine of forgiveness? Without prejudice to other religions, which may be able to find motivations for forgiveness in their own traditions, I am convinced that Christianity, put into practice, provides extraordinarily valuable medicine for the conflicts that plague the world today. Clans, nations, and ethnic or religious groups are often separated by a deep-seated collective animosity that defies merely

juridical, political, or military solutions. Vendettas go on from generation to generation, erupting in ever new acts of violence. Recent outbursts of terrorism are glaring evidence of this disease.

A modern secular Jewish philosopher, Hannah Arendt, recognizes the essential role of forgiveness in enabling societies to overcome the heritage of past injustices. 'The possible redemption from the predicament of irreversibility—of being unable to undo what one has done though one did not, and could not, have known what he was doing—is the faculty of forgiving.' She goes on to say: 'The discoverer of the role of forgiveness in the realm of human affairs was Jesus of Nazareth. The fact that he made this discovery in a religious context and articulated it in religious language is no reason to take it any less seriously in a strictly secular sense.'¹⁰

Pope John Paul II was deeply convinced that societies as well as individuals stand in need of forgiveness:

Families, groups, societies, states, and the international community itself need forgiveness in order to renew ties that have been sundered, go beyond sterile situations of mutual condemnation and overcome the temptation to discriminate against others without appeal. The ability to forgive lies at the very basis of the idea of a future society marked by justice and solidarity.¹¹

In his message for the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2002, Pope John Paul emphatically declared that there can be no peace without justice, and no justice without forgiveness.¹² A politics of forgiveness is both a moral imperative and a practical necessity.

Acts of aggression by one state or alliance against another may be considered as offenses calling for resentment and retribution. The first duty of civil authority is to defend the rights of its own citizens, if necessary by a just war. While the enemy is engaged in hostile action, forgiveness is scarcely possible except in the sense that hatred and vengefulness should be renounced. Once the war is ended, the alternatives of punishment and forgiveness present themselves. After the First World War, the Allied Powers insisted on inserting a 'war guilt clause' in the Treaty of Versailles, placing full responsibility for the devastation on the defeated powers. Inordinate reparations were imposed on Germany, creating financial chaos and planting the seeds of another war. After the Second World War, wiser policies

prevailed. Germans who were deemed personally guilty of serious crimes were tried at Nuremberg, and in some cases severely punished, but the German people as a whole were treated generously.

The Japanese Peace Treaty was likewise inspired by a politics of forgiveness. A certain John Foster Dulles, who negotiated the Treaty on behalf of the United States, characterized it as 'a treaty of reconciliation.' Although it did not entirely omit reparations, it imposed no permanent disabilities or limitations of sovereignty. Dulles was conscious of the religious dimensions of the settlement. Speaking of the Peace Conference of 1951, he declared: 'All the delegates at San Francisco who accepted a religious view of the world, whether Christian, Buddhist, or Moslem, found inspiration from the fact that the treaty invoked the principle of moral law.'¹³ But to demonstrate that the treaty could also be justified on pragmatic grounds, Ambassador Dulles quoted Plato to the effect that wars will never cease so long as the victors execute vengeance on the vanquished.¹⁴ Adhering to Plato's counsel, he insisted on terms that would favor Japan as well as the Allied Powers. This decision has led to a half century of friendship and cooperation.

Special problems arise when forgiveness is sought for injustices committed and suffered by persons no longer living. Is anyone now in a position to offer or demand apologies or compensation? This question arises, for example, in connection with slavery in the United States. In Europe the memories of the Holocaust are still fresh. Orthodox Christians remember the sack of Constantinople in A.D. 1204 almost as if they had been there. Irish Protestants and Catholics have vivid but mutually contrasting memories of the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 and the Easter Rising of 1916. These memories continue to kindle hatred and strife. For any real resolution, forgiveness is required. But who is in a position to ask or bestow forgiveness for actions when the victims and perpetrators are dead? Feodor Dostoevsky wrestled with the dilemma of vicarious forgiveness in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Speaking of the atrocious murder of a child by an angry landowner, Ivan Karamazov tells his brother Alyosha:

'I don't want the mother to embrace the oppressor who threw her son to the dogs! She dare not forgive him! Let her forgive him for herself, if she will, let her forgive the torturer for the immeasurable suffering of her mother's heart. But the suffering of her tortured child she has no right to forgive; she dare not forgive the torturer even if the child were to forgive him'.

Ivan then draws the conclusion:

‘I would rather remain with my unavenged suffering and unsatisfied indignation, even if I were wrong.’¹⁵

At issue is the question whether there is sufficient solidarity and moral continuity in the respective groups for the living to make or receive apologies and reparations for bygone offenses. Dostoevsky’s Ivan, with his radical individualism, gives a negative answer. But Pope John Paul II boldly pursues an opposite course. He evidently considers that, as chief pastor of the Catholic Church today, he is in a position to seek forgiveness for the religious intolerance and violence inflicted long ago by Catholics on Orthodox Christians, Protestants, Jews, and others. He has several times expressed regrets to these groups, and has likewise extended to them the forgiveness of the Catholic Church for what it has suffered at their hands.

It can be debated whether the concept of forgiveness is strictly applicable to such cases. Even if the whole Church in previous centuries were judged to have incurred some kind of collective guilt, it would still have to be shown that that guilt has been inherited by the Church today. Is the Pope in a position to take responsibility for what some Frankish Crusaders did in the thirteenth century or what some bigoted churchmen did in Czechoslovakia in the fifteenth or sixteenth century? Perhaps not, but even so, the Pope’s apologies have positive symbolic value. Minimally, they show that Catholics of today do not share the religious intolerance of their forebears or approve of their violent acts.

Such apologies, as implicit requests for forgiveness, are steps along the path to reconciliation. For reconciliation to be attained, the party to whom the apology is directed must accept it, extend forgiveness, and in some cases must make its own apologies. If each party feels that it has been offended by the other, reciprocal apologies are required to eradicate the seeds of conflict. Only then can the parties enter into a community of love.

In this connection it may be helpful to reflect on what Pope John Paul II and others call the healing of memories.¹⁶ By this I understand the need not to draw a veil over past conflicts but to face them with perfect honesty, in the hope that each group will listen sympathetically to the stories of the other, overcome misunderstandings and exaggerations, recognize its own misdeeds, and begin to forge a common fund of shared memories.

Scott Appleby, in his book *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, explains how religious groups in Northern Ireland and in South Africa have been able to transcend sectarian memories and achieve a measure of shared consciousness.¹⁷ Something similar, I believe, has happened in the United States with regard to the Civil War. Partly because of Abraham Lincoln's posture of forgiveness, so memorably expressed in his Second Inaugural, Yankees have found ways to revere the skill and valor of Confederate soldiers, and vice versa.

In the case of South Africa, when apartheid came to an end, a bloodbath was averted by an unusual process of reconciliation. The government established a 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' which gave amnesties very liberally to former officials of the oppressive National Party and, I believe, to some revolutionaries who had committed atrocities. Such amnesties were given only on condition that the recipients would make a full public disclosure of the crimes they had committed. Because the TRC did not require remorse, apologies, and reparations as conditions for escaping prosecution, it has sometimes been accused of offering 'cheap grace.' However that may be, the TRC successfully warded off violence and effected a remarkable measure of reconciliation. The new government achieved the goal of preventing the endless cycle of reprisals.¹⁸

Both in Northern Ireland and in South Africa the prevalent Christian ethos has greatly assisted the relatively successful (though still incomplete) process of reconciliation. Reconciliation may be more difficult to achieve among groups that do not share the Christian faith. It will be for them to judge whether they can find resources for a politics of forgiveness in their own religious or secular traditions. Without some such an ethos, it is almost inevitable that the present politics of violence will continue and even intensify.

The spirit of forgiveness, I would contend, is essential for the preservation of human community, whether in the home, the neighborhood, the nation, or the world. It is no less necessary for disposing individual persons to receive forgiveness from God. By itself forgiveness will not solve all personal and social problems, but these problems cannot be solved without it. The strongest motive for that spirit is the realization of our own great need of forgiveness and of the extremes to which God has gone in order to bring us the forgiveness we need.

Notes:

1. Martin E. Marty, 'The Ethos of Christian Forgiveness,' in Everett L. Worthington, Jr., ed., *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research and Theological Perspectives* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 1998), 9-28, at 11.
2. John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Dives in misericordia*, 14.
3. *Fifteen Sermons*, vol. 2 of *The Works of Joseph Butler* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1896). Sermon 8 is 'Upon Resentment' and Sermon 9 'Upon the Forgiveness of Injuries.'
4. W. H. Auden, *Collected Poems* (New York: Random House, 1976), 304; quoted by Marty, 'The Ethos,' 13.
5. 'Ministers of Mercy: The Sacrament of Reconciliation,' *Origins* 31 (April 4, 2002): 704-08.
6. John Paul II, *Encyclical Dives in misericordia*, 14.
7. Most modern versions include the verse, but some, such as the New American Bible, print it in brackets.
8. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I, line 105.
9. William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV, scene 1.
10. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition: A Study of the Central Conditions Facing Modern Man* (Doubleday Anchor Books: Garden City, N.Y., 1959), 237, 238.
11. John Paul II, 'World Day of Peace Message,' '9; *Origins* 31 (December 20, 2001): 461-66 at 465.
12. *Ibid.*, '15, 466.
13. Quoted in Mark Toulouse, *The Transformation of John Foster Dulles* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1985), 239.
14. 'Japan's Future: An Interview with John Foster Dulles,' *Newsweek*, 10 September 1951, 31-35; quotation from Plato at 31. The reference is to Letter VII, secs. 336-37.
15. Quoted in Donald W. Shriver, Jr., *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 64.
16. The term 'purification of memory' appeared in John Paul II, *Incarnationis mysterium*, the Bull of Indiction for the Holy Year 2000, '11, *Origins* 28 (December 10, 1998): 446-53, at 450. The theological implications are explored in the document of the International Theological Commission, 'Memory and Reconciliation,' *Origins* 29 (March 16, 2000): 625-44. Cardinal Francis Arinze speaks of 'healing historical memories' in the context of interfaith dialogue in his *Meeting Other Believers* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1998), 98-99.
17. R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham, Md.: Rowan and Littlefield, 2000), chapter 5, pp. 167-204.
18. The granting of amnesties in Guatemala in 1996 has proved much less successful. In the absence of an effective system of justice, human rights abuses there continue to be perpetrated with impunity, except for the action of vigilante groups that take the law into their own hands.

Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J. delivered the above McGinley Lecture at Fordham University, Bronx, New York, on April 10, 2002. An abbreviated version of this lecture was originally published in America 187 (October 2002): 6-10. It is reproduced here as a full version for the first time with the kind personal agreement of the Cardinal. Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J. is currently the Laurence J. McGinley Professor of Religion and Society at Fordham University, a position he has held since 1988. An internationally known author and lecturer, he was born in New York on August 24th 1918, the son of John Foster Dulles, a previous American Secretary of State, and Janet Pomery Avery Dulles, both of whom were Presbyterians. A testimonial account of his conversion to Catholicism was republished in 1996 by the original publishers, Sheen and Ward, and contains his reflections on the fifty years since he became a Catholic. He was created a Cardinal in the Catholic Church by Pope John Paul II on February 21, 2001 — the first American born theologian who is a non-bishop to receive this honour. He is the author of 750 articles on theological topics.