

I'm sure many of you have seen a situation where two little kids are fighting, and the mother comes to break it up. Then, the mother speaks the impossible. She says: "Now, say you're sorry to your brother." And both boys dig in, not willing to give in. They glare at each other. The mother holding each of them by their collar, demands again: "Say you are sorry to each other." Finally, the younger boy says in a barely auditable voice: "I'm sorry." And the older one knowing that if he doesn't follow suit he will be given the brunt end of the punishment, also says: "I'm sorry." But when the mother is out of range, the older boy says to his brother: "I had my fingers crossed!" And the fighting begins again.

Saying "I'm sorry" to another person and meaning it could be one of the hardest things to do. We feel if someone has hurt me, then I have the right to seek vengeance, or at least not forgive that person. The Lord tells us differently. He teaches to seek reconciliation with the one who hurt us. And, to love your neighbor as yourself, even when he offends you.

To reconcile means to bring people back on friendly terms. It meant to end the conflict and to solve a dispute or end a quarrel. The process of reconciliation is to bring back together what was once united but has been torn apart.

Jesus came to reconcile all of humankind with God the Father. Our Lord did this through His Glorious Cross. The Bible tells us: "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." 2 Cor.5:18 What's more: "We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us." 2 Cor. 5:20

You are I are "ambassadors for Christ"—ambassadors of reconciliation. We are to be active instruments of forgiveness and mercy, so as to bring back together those who once were united.

A powerful example of an ambassador of reconciliation is Nelson Mandela. For 20 years, Mandela directed peaceful, nonviolent acts of defiance against the South African government and its racist policies. Mandela was arrested and imprisoned for his anti-apartheid activity, and would spend 27 years in prison, while horrific injustices were being done to African native people.

Upon his release from prison, Mandela sought reconciliation, not revenge, with his white political opponents. He set up The Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate human rights and political violations committed by both supporters and opponents of apartheid, which granted amnesty, not punishment, for those who admitted their crimes with remorse. Mandela received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.

As Christians, we are to be instruments of the Lord's peace towards even those who wrong us. God's peace is not a mere absence of conflict, but an environment of respect and reverence for every person. We are Christ's ambassadors and have been given the ministry of reconciliation.