

Key Concepts

| | | | |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| Punishment | The consequences or penalty for someone that has committed a crime. | Absolutism | The belief that there are certain actions which are always right or always wrong. |
| Sin | An act against God | Relativism | The belief that certain actions are right or wrong depending on the situation or circumstances. |
| Forgiveness | The act of pardoning someone for the offences they've caused you. Overlooking a person's faults. | Eucharist | Meaning "thanksgiving". The sacrament in which Roman Catholics remember the Last Supper. |
| Salvation | The belief that through Jesus' death and resurrection humanity has achieved the possibility of eternal life. | Evangelisation | Spreading the "Good News" which can be translated as "Gospel" The sharing of the Gospel and life of Jesus with others. |

Catholic Teaching on Forgiveness

Forgiveness was a central part of Jesus' teaching found in the Gospels. Jesus' example and teaching shows Christians that they should treat others with compassion, love, mercy and forgiveness. Some of the most important teachings on forgiveness are found in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus uses parables to show that Christians need to forgive and show people mercy so that God will forgive them and show them mercy.

Sources of Authority

'Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.' **Matthew**

"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us" **Matthew**

"Blessed are the merciful" **Matthew**

"Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing" **Luke**

| | |
|---|---|
| Gospel of Matthew on Forgiveness | In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus taught ' The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant '. He makes it clear there is no limit to forgiveness. The main message of the parable is that God will forgive those and show mercy to those who are willing to forgive and show mercy to others: ' Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times" '. The importance of forgiveness is also shown in the Lord's Prayer (Our Father). Catholics ask God to " forgive their sins, as they forgive those who have sinned against them ". This means Catholics can only expect to receive forgiveness from God if they are forgiving towards others. In the Beatitudes Jesus teaches " Blessed are the merciful " |
| Other teachings on forgiveness | There are many examples from Jesus' life for Christians to follow. Jesus forgave the woman accused of adultery in the Gospel of John, telling her to " go and sin no more. " The parable of the Prodigal Son is one of Jesus' best known stories. Some think it should be called the parable of the Forgiving Father because the father forgives his son and welcomes him back even though he had done wrong. Jesus showed forgiveness in the last moments of his life as he was being put to death. While he was on the cross he says, " Father, forgive them " |
| Should Catholics always forgive or is forgiveness just letting people off? | In the Bible, there is a conflict between forgiveness and punishment . As well as teaching about forgiveness Jesus also spoke about justice . He also spoke about God's punishment for wrong-doers, in the next life. On Judgement Day , God will judge all humans according to how they have behaved. If they have behaved justly they will be rewarded in heaven . It is up to God to judge people and he will forgive those who are truly sorry for what they have done and want to change. Many Christians believe that punishment and forgiveness can go together . Many Christians would see the main role of punishment as being to help the person involved to reform. |

Exam Practice

b) Describe John Paul II teaching on capital punishment (5)

b) Describe Catholic beliefs about capital punishment