

## Views from the Pews: Unconditional forgiveness

Lent is a good time to immerse ourselves in the profound devotion for God expressed in the metaphysical poetry of George Herbert. Here are two of his most famous poems that speak straight to the heart during this penitential season.

*Love bade me welcome. Yet my soul drew back/ Guilty of dust and sin.*

*But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack/ From my first entrance in,*

*Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,/ If I lacked any thing.*

*A guest, I answered, worthy to be here:/ Love said, You shall be he.*

*I the unkind, ungrateful? Ah my dear,/ I cannot look on thee.*

*Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,/ Who made the eyes but I?*

*Truth Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame/ Go where it doth deserve.*

*And know you not, says Love, who bore the blame?/ My dear, then I will serve.*

*You must sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:/So I did sit and eat.*

---

In *The Pulley*, Herbert provided a perfect description of why our hearts long for God.

*When God at first made man, Having a glass of blessings standing by,*

*“Let us,” said he, “pour on him all we can. Let the world’s riches, which dispersèd lie,  
Contract into a span.”*

*So strength first made a way; Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure.*

*When almost all was out, God made a stay, Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,  
Rest in the bottom lay.*

*“For if I should,” said he, “Bestow this jewel also on my creature,*

*He would adore my gifts instead of me, And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;*

*So both should losers be.*

*“Yet let him keep the rest, But keep them with repining restlessness;  
Let him be rich and weary, that at least, If goodness lead him not, yet weariness  
May toss him to my breast.”*

*George Herbert, 1593-1633*