

Wednesday March 26th for the fourth Sunday of Lent

OPENING PRAYER: God of compassion, we rejoice in your holy Word, Jesus, who again and again offers us mercy for our sins and helps us to forgive one another. As we continue our journey to Easter, may heaven grant us the courage to change what needs to be changed in our lives and fill us with the joy that comes from experiencing you as a God of mercy. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

- In the words of Saint Benedict, “Listen with the ears of your heart.”
- Please note a word, phrase, or verse that seemed to really catch your notice.
- A volunteer slowly read aloud today’s passage Afterwards, we have a few minutes of silent reflection.

READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL ACCORDING TO Luke

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

The Parable of the Lost Sheep.^a

1* The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to him,

2 but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”^b

3 So to them he addressed this parable.

The Parable of the Lost Son.

11 Then he said, “A man had two sons,

12 and the younger son said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.’ So the father divided the property between them.

13 After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation.^g

14 When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need.

15 So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine.

16 And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any.

17 Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger.

18 I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

19 I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.'"

20 So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him.

21 His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.'

22 But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

23 Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast,

24 because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began.

25 Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing.

26 He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean.

27 The servant said to him, ‘Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

28 He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him.

29 He said to his father in reply, ‘Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends.

30 But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.’

31 He said to him, ‘My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours.

32 But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’”

Notes

* [15:1–32] To the parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15:1–7) that Luke shares with Matthew (Mt 18:12–14), Luke adds two parables (the lost coin, Lk 15:8–10; the prodigal son, Lk 15:11–32) from his own special tradition to illustrate Jesus’ particular concern for the lost and God’s love for the repentant sinner.

* [15:8] Ten coins: literally, “ten drachmas.” A drachma was a Greek silver coin.

a. [15:1–7] Mt 9:10–13.

b. [15:2] 5:30; 19:7.

c. [15:4–7] Mt 18:12–14.

d. [15:4–6] 19:10.

e. [15:4] Ez 34:11–12, 16.

f. [15:7] Ez 18:23.

g. [15:13] Prv 29:3.

QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

1. A part of being a “new creation” is learning to be an “ambassador of reconciliation.” How have you been such an ambassador? How can you be a minister of reconciliation?
2. Have you ever been like the younger son? What transformed you?
3. How can we be like the older son in the story? What kind of conversion is asked of us?

Commentary

This parable is told as a response to the Pharisees and Scribes who were criticizing Jesus for showing friendship to sinners. The parable is a call to conversion for self-righteous and judgmental people. Initially, the parable shows that the younger son is a big sinner showing no respect for his father. In asking for a share of his inheritance, he is wishing his father were dead. As Jesus talks about the younger son wasting his life, the Pharisees would have felt superior thinking that they are nothing like that irresponsible sinner. When the younger son “comes to his senses” and decides to come home, the father runs out to meet him, embraces him and has a great feast for him. Two comments on this part of the story. • The parable should more aptly be renamed The Parable of the Forgiving Father since it is not so much about the son and his sin, but rather about the father and his mercy. • The son returning to a feast is symbolic of people who return to the Eucharist after being away for years. Jesus’ outreach to the older son and the Pharisees. When the older son hears about the celebration for his brother, he becomes very angry and lashes out at his father: “Look all these years.” The Pharisees would have felt very much like this son. Like him, they too have obeyed the rules. Just as the older son resents the father for welcoming back the younger son, so too the Pharisees would have resented Jesus’ attitude towards sinners like the tax collectors and prostitutes. As the story continues, we see that the older son is also a sinner for being

incapable of loving his own brother and for his refusal to share in his father's joy. As one commentator says: "The older son is lawless within the law." The father loves both sons and goes out to meet both of them. The younger son allows himself to be loved by his father and gladly receives his mercy. The older son closes his heart to his father. He is so self-righteous and judgmental that he cannot see his own sin and therefore his need for mercy. Through this parable, Jesus not only teaches about God's great mercy, but he also hopes to reach the hearts of the Pharisees. If they would open their hearts to him, they too would be welcome to sit at God's table. But if they remain self-righteous, judgmental and hard-hearted, they will exclude themselves from the Kingdom of God.

IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?

IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?

CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer

Bible Sharing Parish Hall and Zoom
Wednesday, March 26 6:30 – 7:30pm
Weekly on Wednesday
Zoom Meeting

Description: Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Blessed Sacrament's Zoom Meeting
Time: March 26, 2025 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZolduisqDosE923wHRoszXqNBSkCL57ORPg/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhpjorHtKTthCORpx5Goj4d-jwpiFdj_oPzwjNMS9AeDvnGMBxOZFTRY

Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85136740699?pwd=Q2pXLzdzZFdNNU1NajVpeEtKUohJQTo9>

Meeting ID: 811 6265 5618
Passcode: 280607