

# Family Prayer

## Fourth Week of Lent - 30 March - 5 April 2025

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We acknowledge the First Nations peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay our respect to the Elders past, present, and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of First Nations peoples across the nation. We acknowledge the deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

### Context - Fourth Sunday of Lent

The Fourth Sunday of Lent sees us pass the halfway mark of our Lenten journeys. Sunday was Laetare Sunday. Laetare is Latin for rejoice, and this Sunday takes its name from the Entrance Antiphon for this week. Whilst the readings for the fourth Sunday of Lent change each year, the entrance antiphon remains the same across years A, B and C and the Gospel readings for each year invite us to rejoice in some manner. Continuing with the theme of mercy and compassion from last week's readings, there is much rejoicing at the return of a lost son in the Gospel for this week.

### Scripture

**Scripture: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32**

*A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.*

*Your brother here was dead and has come to life.*

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained.

'This man' they said 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

So he spoke this parable to them:

'A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, "Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me." 'So, the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery. 'When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. 'Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! "I will leave this place and go to my father and say:

Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you;

I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants." So he left the place and went back to his father. 'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. Then his son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son." 'But the father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." 'And they began to celebrate.



Figure 1: Adobe Stock Image: 486404074

‘Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. “Your brother has come” replied the servant, “and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back safe and sound.” ‘He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him; but he answered his father, “Look, all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. “But, for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property — he and his women — you kill the calf we had been fattening.”



Figure 2: *Prodigal Son* by Jorge Cocco

‘The father said, “My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found.”’

The Gospel of the Lord.

## Reflection

‘The story of the Prodigal Son is one of a journey of conversion of heart and repentance, much like our own journeys during Lent.

He had drifted far, seemingly too far, from his father and the life he had once had. When he decided to return, it was not from a place of expecting, he was prepared to do hard work to make it right. Repentance is not easy, and we must first begin from our own discomfort as we make a decision to turn towards our Father.

When the son returns to his father, we see the compassion and mercy of God personified. How wonderful that we have a loving God willing to embrace us once we begin on the journey home!

In her reflection for the Metanoia Lenten program, Mother Hilda Scott OSB tells us that love will work a way. She reminds us that the story of the Prodigal Son is the story of a broken relationship between a father and son. When we make choices that distance us from God, we break the relationship with him. She asks us to consider what do we do when we have a broken relationship with God? Mother Hilda says, we keep loving and ultimately, we are always returning to the Father, the source from which love originates and flows. Love will make a way.

Lent is an opportunity for us to demonstrate our love for God in spite of our shortcomings. When we continue to show up with love, the shortcomings can be overcome.

Mother Hilda finishes her reflection by reminding us, pour love into whatever you do, whoever you are, and you give God permission to bring you and others home, firstly to himself and then to each other.

## Prayer

Loving Father,  
As we contemplate the parable of the Prodigal Son, help us to recognize Your boundless mercy and compassion. May we, like the lost son, find the courage to return to You, Trusting in Your forgiveness and love. Grant us the grace to celebrate the joy of reconciliation, and to extend that same mercy to others in our lives. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*This prayer is from the Knights of Columbus Fraternal Association of the Philippines.*

## Call to Action

- Watch this [2-minute homily](#) by Fr Anson Kalathiparambli OSA
- Use this craft [template](#) and follow the [instructions](#) to make this Prodigal Son craft.
- Download and print the gameboard, and find the instructions for the Prodigal Son's Journey Home [here](#).
- Pray this [Lenten examen](#) from Ignatian Spirituality.
- Listen to [Run to the Father](#) by Matt Maher as a reflection on the compassion and mercy of God.



Figure 3: @ Drawn to the Word/Paul Oman Fine Art. All Rights Reserved.