

TO THE Heights



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT: LAETARE SUNDAY

 youthministry@waterfordlismore.ie



Year C

Sunday Mass Readings

First Reading:

Joshua 5:9-12

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 33(34):2-7

Second Reading:

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Gospel:

Luke 15:1-3,11-32

...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.

Game Changers

The Catholic Church's Liturgical Calendar is crammed full of inspirational saints, or as we like to call them, Game Changers!

- You can check out our GameChanger Series resources, free to download [by clicking here!](#)
- You can also download all our Lenten and Easter resources including our Stations of the Cross pack [by clicking here!](#)
- Extra resources on the Sacrament of Confession [here](#)



Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have a Bible? No worries, click the bible image for this week's readings!



- 1.What is the context for this parable? Who was Jesus aiming his words at?
- 2.What was so hurtful about the son asking for his father's inheritance? What was he effectively saying?
- 3.Pigs were considered to be unclean animals - what extra relevance does that have for this story?
- 4.Did his father welcome him back as a servant, like he had hoped?
- 5.What signs of welcome did the son receive?
- 6.How does the eldest brother refer to the younger brother in his complaint to his father?
- 7.How does the father reassure the eldest brother while also explaining the cause for celebration?



Gospel Reflection: THE FRIENDSHIP AND MERCY OF GOD



Now into the third week of the Season of Lent, our Sunday Gospel prepares us to hear Lent's call to conversion and repentance.

Luke tells us that some among the crowds report to Jesus a massacre of Galileans by Pilate. The intention of the crowd seems to be to ask Jesus to explain why these people suffered. It was commonplace to render people's suffering as evidence of their sinfulness. Jesus challenges this interpretation. Those who were massacred were no more or less sinful than the ones who report the situation to Jesus. Jesus replies that even a fatal accident, a natural disaster, ought not to be interpreted as punishment for sin.

Jesus' words at first appear to have a fire-and-brimstone quality. Jesus says in essence, "Repent or perish as these people did; all are sinful before God and deserving of God's punishment." The tone changes, however, in the parable that follows. The parable of the barren fig tree contrasts the patience and hopefulness of the gardener with the practicality of the property owner. When told to cut down the fig tree because it is not producing fruit, the gardener counsels patience. If properly tended, the barren fig tree may yet bear fruit.

Throughout his journey to Jerusalem, Jesus has been teaching about the Kingdom of God. In this parable, we find an image of God's patience and hopefulness as he prepares his Kingdom. God calls us to repent, and it is within his power to punish us for our failure to turn from our sinfulness. And yet God is merciful. He delays punishment and tends to us so that we may yet bear the fruit he desires from us.

This, then, is our reason for hope: Not only does God refuse to abandon us, he chooses to attend to us even when we show no evidence of his efforts. Next week's Gospel will give an even clearer picture of the kind of mercy that God shows to us.

Loyola Press – Sunday Connection

#lostisfound #welcomehome

OUR REASON TO REJOICE!

We call the fourth Sunday of Lent Laetare Sunday, because it's a day to rejoice! That might seem a little odd in the middle of the penitential season of Lent. What do we have to rejoice about? Giving up chocolate doesn't fill most people with joy! Today's Gospel teaches us exactly what our cause for rejoicing is: God's love and mercy! No matter what we do, or how far we turn from God, He is always waiting for us just to take one step back to Him, into His arms open wide! This is our God! This is our reason to rejoice! Put yourself in the shoes of the Prodigal Son for a moment - in the depths of misery, shame and worthlessness: he really couldn't sink any lower. All he wanted and hoped for was to be taken back as a servant, but he got so much more than he could have dreamed of! His father never stopped loving him, never stopped watching and waiting for him, embraced him in his misery and filth and stench, welcomed him back into the heart of the family and called a celebration to welcome him home. And for the record, his love for the eldest son was always unconditional too, even when he refused to welcome his brother back, or didn't recognise the goodness in his father's heart all along. Let's rejoice in God's love for us today!



TEACHER'S CORNER

Medjugorje Night at Glencomeragh House:

Thursday April 7th beginning with Rosary at 8pm, followed by Mass and Adoration.

Silent Retreat preached by: Fr. Kilian Byrne, Foyer of Charity at Glencomeragh House, April 18-24, Cost €380 full board. Contact Helen 086 1678027/ hellywilliams@gmail.com

One-Day Healing and Renewal Retreat for Married Couples of All Ages: Sun 10th April, 10am - 4pm, Holy Family Mission, Glencomeragh House. €75 per couple including three course dinner, teas and coffees. Booking essential. For more info: (052) 6133181 or info@holymission.ie

Arise Family Conference: A Catholic family conference will be held in Tramore from 17th to 22nd April. Booking essential. More details at www.arisefamilyconference.ie

TESTIMONY TIME



Young Person's Prayer



Act of Sorrow

O my God, I thank you for loving me. I am sorry for all my sins: for not loving others, and not loving You. Help me to live like Jesus and not sin again. Amen.

TUNE OF THE WEEK

You Invite Me In

Meredith Andrews



WEEKLY CHALLENGE:



Jesus never wanted his parables to stay as stories, but he wanted us to find God and ourselves in them: Have I ever felt like the Prodigal Son? have I ever felt like I have disappointed someone? Have I ever turned away from God? Have I ever needed to ask for forgiveness? are there some specific areas of my life where I need God's forgiveness? Can I go to confession this week?

WATCH: [The Parable of the Lost Son Bible Animation](#)



CHECK IT OUT: ARISE FAMILY HOLIDAY CONFERENCE



Join with other families to celebrate the joy of Easter in the beautiful Tramore, Co. Waterford. Starting on Easter Sunday evening and going through to Friday 22nd, there will be an extensive programme of talks, workshops, seminars, social events and activities for all the family. There will be Holy Mass each day. Book via the Arise website: www.arisefamilyconference.ie and find a list of local accommodation





Arms Open Wide!

...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.

CHECK OUT WHAT CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SAYS ABOUT THE PRODIGAL SON CCC 1439

JESUS WAS ALL ABOUT FORGIVENESS – CAN YOU NAME SOME STORIES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT BACK THAT STATEMENT UP?

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THE PRODIGAL SON

READ [LUKE 15:1-11-32](#) OR WATCH AN ANIMATED VERSION [HERE](#)

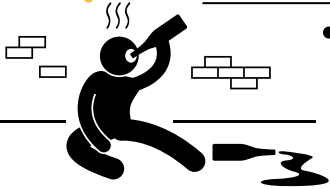
(The Parable of the Lost Son Bible Animation (Luke 15:11-32))

IT CAN BE A FAMILIAR STORY, AND FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTEMPT, RIGHT? LET'S LOOK CLOSER AT SOME DETAILS...



- Why was it so offensive for the younger son to ask for his inheritance?

- Why was it particularly shameful for the son to end up working with pigs?



- In today's culture, what kind of behaviour would you expect the younger son to be involved in?



- What thoughts might have made it difficult for the son to return home and ask forgiveness?

- How do you think the father saw him when he was still a long way off?

- What was the son's life like when he cut himself off from his father?



- What was his life like when he repented?



- What details do you notice about the father in the passage? What do they teach us about the father's heart, do you think?



ARMS OPEN WIDE

LUKE 15:1-11:32

- What do you think Jesus wants to teach us about His Father's heart?



Get the word out!

Imagine you are the prodigal son, or the father, or the eldest son in this story. How would you share the news on either Instagram, Snapchat or TikTok?



Create some hashtags appropriate to the story. Example: #lostisfound



Now Read Luke 15:1-11-32



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MISSION!

JESUS NEVER WANTED HIS PARABLES TO STAY AS STORIES, BUT HE WANTED US TO FIND GOD AND OURSELVES IN THEM: HAVE I EVER FELT LIKE THE PRODIGAL SON? HAVE I EVER FELT LIKE I HAVE DISAPPOINTED SOMEONE? HAVE I EVER TURNED AWAY FROM GOD? HAVE I EVER NEEDED TO ASK FOR FORGIVENESS? ARE THERE SOME SPECIFIC AREAS OF MY LIFE WHERE I NEED GOD'S FORGIVENESS? CAN I GO TO CONFESSION THIS WEEK?



PRAYER TIME!

Act of Sorrow: O my God, I thank you for loving me. I am sorry for all my sins: for not loving others, and not loving You. Help me to live like Jesus and not sin again. Amen.



CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON FORGIVENESS THIS WEEK



- You invite me in - Meredith Andrews
- Still calls me son - John Waller
- Forgiven - Sanctus Real
- Prodigal - Casting Crowns
- Lord have Mercy - MW Smith
- The Prodigal Song - Cory Asbury
- Prodigal - Sidewalk Prophets
- Father I have sinned - Fr Eugene O'Reilly

Click the links for the YouTube videos to listen to some suggestions!



10:43 MINS



Br Malachy CFR:
Running Away from God

8:53 MINS



Fr Mary Mary CFR:
We've all forgotten how to celebrate



In His Sandals

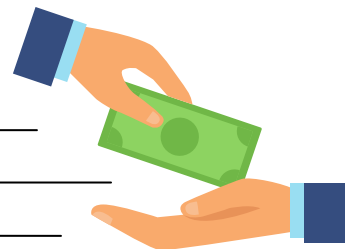
Use your imagination to reflect on the parable...

IMAGINE YOU ARE THE PRODIGAL SON IN THIS PARABLE. WRITE A SERIES OF SHORT DIARY ENTRIES CHRONICLING YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS THROUGHOUT THIS ENTIRE EPISODE.

PRIOR TO LEAVING HOME



THE DAY YOU LEFT



A WEEK INTO YOUR NEW LIFE...PARTY CENTRAL!



THE MONEY IS GONE...



IN HIS SANDALS

LUKE 15:1-11-32

DECIDING TO GO HOME



ARRIVING HOME



A YEAR LATER...

