




# FAITH @ Home

30 MARCH 2025: 4TH SUNDAY IN LENT | YEAR C

Diocese of Waterford & Lismore  
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*Celebrating and supporting faith, hope and love in the heart of the family!*

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION ALSO AVAILABLE

## 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

LAETARE SUNDAY



image: canva.com

...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.

## Hear



Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [HERE](#).

## Pray



In the Gospel today we hear the very familiar story of the Prodigal Son. It's good to look at stories like this with fresh eyes, watching out for details we may have missed. Today we invite you to focus on the father's actions.

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- Can you imagine how the father's heart must have broken when his son asked for his inheritance early? Have I ever been ungrateful?
- Notice how the father saw his son from a distance - he never stopped loving or watching for his son's return. He never gave up hope. Am I conscious of just how much God the Father loves me and is ready to forgive me?

## Family Prayer



*Lord, let us turn back with all our hearts to you this Lent, confident that You await us with a loving embrace. Amen*

## Talk



In this week's Gospel, we hear about the parable of the Prodigal Son. Sometimes it's called the Lost Son or even the Merciful Father.

- Do you know what prodigal means? It means wasteful. Am I wasteful with anything at home? Do I look after my toys and belongings properly or am I careless with them?
- Think of 5 nice things someone has done for you this week - did you show your gratitude for them? It's never too late!
- The eldest brother in the parable was very jealous of his younger brother and couldn't rejoice when he came home. Are we ever jealous of someone in my family, thinking they get more than me? How do we act when we're jealous? What kind of things do we say?
- How does Jesus want us to act instead?

## Family Challenge!



Make a really special effort this week to be grateful: have an attitude of gratitude! Be conscious of all the small (and big!) things your family do for you and make sure to say thanks! If you're tempted to complain or feel jealous, think of 3 things to be grateful for instead!

# THE FRIENDSHIP AND MERCY OF GOD

The parable Jesus tells in today's Gospel is unique to the Gospel of Luke and invites us to consider the depth of God's mercy and love.

In their interpretation and practice, observant Jews who shared table fellowship with sinners would be made unclean. Jesus reaches out to sinners while they are still sinners, inviting them to conversion through fellowship with him. Jesus is God acting among us; by befriending us, he is inviting us to return to friendship with God. Through friendship with Jesus, our sins are forgiven and we, in turn, bear fruit for God. Recall last Sunday's Gospel and the barren fig tree.

We call this the parable of the lost son or the prodigal son. Any focus on the younger son, however, must also be balanced by an examination of the unusual behaviour of the father.

First we must imagine our first response to the audacity of a son who asks for his inheritance before his father has died. Indignation would certainly be a justifiable response to such a request. Yet the father in this parable agrees to honour the son's request and divides his property among his two sons. How might we describe such a father? Foolish comes to mind, but so does trusting. Without property of his own, the father must rely upon his sons to provide for his well-being.

The younger son takes his inheritance and leaves home. The older son remains, continuing to provide for the father and the household. Having been disgraced by the younger son, the father spends some time watching the road for the return of the lost son. When he eventually sees his wayward son returning, the father not only welcomes him but also runs out to greet him and then honours him with a party. We say that this father is loving and forgiving. Yet these adjectives only begin to describe the depth of love and mercy that characterize the father.

We find no surprise in the anger of the older son. Yet the father appears sad and even confused by the older son's indignation. He says in reply that they should celebrate because the lost son had returned. The father is filled with gratitude and love for the older son's faithfulness. This love is in no way diminished by the father's rejoicing at the return of the younger son. Yet the older son's jealousy reveals his limited understanding of the depth of his father's love.

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is traditionally called Laetare Sunday. Laetare is a Latin word that means "rejoice." Today's Gospel describes the reason for our joy: God's great love for us has been revealed in Jesus.

Adapted from [Loyola Press - Sunday Connection](#)



## CARLO'S CORNER

*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!

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?

 [The Parable of the Prodigal Son Bible Animation](#)

 [Run to the Father: Cory Carles](#)



*To the Heights Youth Resource also available*

*Check this out*

### BIBLE APPS



The Prodigal Son - A Father's Love

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