

First Reading: Joshua 5:9-12
Response: “*Taste and see that the Lord is good*” (Ps.33:9)
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 33:2-7,
Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
Gospel: Luke 15:1-3,11-32

The Risen Lord is ever reaching out to us with loving hands and forgiveness. As sinners, we bite the hand that feeds us. He is steadfastly true to his character, even if we be fickle and change. God keeps his promise. This is what we celebrate this joyful Sunday, ‘*Laetare.*’

The People celebrate their departure from slavery and their pilgrimage through the desert. “*The Lord said to Joshua, “Today I have taken the shame of Egypt away from you.”*” (Jos.5:9).

The people settled in the Promised Land, “*keeping the Passover*” (Jos.5:9), a feast that celebrates God’s mighty deeds. It was “*from that time manna stop falling*” (Jos.5:9), when the people were comfortable, living off the produce of the land.

But man does not live by bread alone. More important is the word of God. His Word is spirit and life. “*Taste and see that the Lord is good*” (Ps.33:9).

God is the fullness of joy and life. “*Look towards him and be radiant*” (Ps.33:6). Psalm 33 is an alphabetical psalm, each verse beginning with the following letter of the Hebrew alphabet, showing God all in all, as letters spell the word, and his Word spells creation.

Paul spells out the Word. It is Christ, by which “*there is a new creation*” (2 Cor.5:17). St. Paul says, “*God has reconciled us to himself through Christ*” (2 Cor.5:18). ***What does reconciliation mean?***

Paul explains how Christ became one like us so that we may be like him, “*so that in him we might become the goodness of God*” (2 Cor.5:21). The goodness of God is compassion and love.

Jesus Christ is the full revelation of God. He portrays beautifully, how God is a forgiving and loving father, in the parable of the ‘Prodigal Son.’ “*His father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms*” (Lk.15:20).

See how God loves and forgives his people. There is great joy when the sinner returns into the arms of his Father. “*We should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life*” (Lk.15:32). This time of repentance offers a moment of joy.

Study, reflect and share the story of the “Forgiving Father,” The Prodigal Father. **Gospel.**

When do we, as prodigal son, come home and God forgives? Sacrament of **Penance.**

Lent is a special season of penance and reconciliation with God who is merciful and full of compassion, and of reconciliation with our neighbour. (**Teaching**)

Do not let anything come between you and God, and between you and brother, sister. (**Witness**)

FOR THE CHILDREN

Discuss with the children the story of the ‘Prodigal Son’ in the Gospel (Lk.15:1-3,11-32).

Discuss the importance of reconciliation between parent, child, brother and sister. Penance.

Teach children to be Father-like to one another and not be bitter brothers and sisters.

Think of someone to whom you should say 'Sorry' and be reconciled with him/her.

FOR TEENAGERS (*Christian Praxis*)

Name the Present Action: *What is your take of the youngest son, the father and the older brother, in the parable of Jesus 'Prodigal Son'?*

Your Story and Vision: *What are your moments of self-centredness or for others?*

Church's Story and Vision: *Give Church teaching on mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation*

Yours and Church's Vision: *Can you envisage a life of mercy, love and forgiveness, a way of life in the Kingdom of a God of compassion?*

RCIA

Lent is a time of conversion, to examine ourselves and change our ways. How did we get into the pigsty of sin? Come to the Father and live a life of joy, peace and happiness.

LIFE EXPERIENCE

I know of two sisters, beautiful girls, affable and everybody likes them. I have seen them grow from little children into young lassies. The sad thing is they will not speak to each other. The sibling rivalry was very strong and seemingly the parents did not deal with it. When will the sisters learn that they are also daughters of our loving Father who says: "**all that is mine is yours**" (Lk. 15:31). Will they learn to accept one another and share all that he has given them? How much are we like these sisters or like the brothers in the parable?

LITTLE ANGELINA

Angelina made her little cousin cry. It was not unusual for them to have their differences. Angelina was ordered by her mother to go and say sorry. Unwillingly, she obeyed. The mother explained that her cousin was a visitor and that Angelina should make her feel at home. "And what about me," she asked, "how do you think I feel?"

IMPORTANT WORD: "Συνεσθειν", "**Synesthein**", "**Eat together**" (Lk. 15:2)

The parable of the 'Prodigal Son' follows on the parables of 'The Lost Sheep' and 'The Lost Coin.' They are Jesus' response to criticism by the Jews of the fact that he eats with sinners. He shows that God's love is unconditional and welcomes home every sinner, no matter how low, even if he has eaten with pigs. 'Synesthein' is the original Greek word, meaning to 'eat together.' Jesus' table-fellowship shows the Lord, not only with sinners but all at table together are brothers and sisters. Such is the Table of the Lord in the Eucharist, united with God and with one another.

Watchword: "**Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.**" (Lk. 15:21)

Hebrew: אבי חטאתי לשמים ולפניך

'Avi hata'thi lashamayim ulefoneka.

Greek: Πater, ημαρτον εις τον ουρανον και ενωπιον σου.

Pater, hemarton eis ton ouranon kai enopion sou.

Latin: Pater, peccavi in caelum et coram te.

Portuguese: Pai, pequei contra o ceu e perante ti.

Spanish: Padre, he pecado contra el cielo y contra ti.

French: Mon pere, j'ai peche contre Dieu et contre toi.

German: Vater, ich have gesundigt gegen den Himmel und vor dir.

Afrikaans: Pa, ek het teen God en teen Pa gesondig.

Zulu: Baba, ngonile phambi kukaNkulunkulu osezulwini naphambi kwakho.

Xhosa: Bawo, ndimonile uThixo, nawe ndikonile.

Sotho: Ntate, ke sitetswe lehodimo le wena.

Irish: A athair, pheacaig me in aghaidh na bhflaitheas agus i do lathairse.