

March 30, 2025

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Jos 5:9a, 10-12 | 2 Cor 5:17-21 | Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

We await with anticipation holidays and holiday parties – but do we look forward to the day after? To the cleanup, the back-to-the-grind, the business-as-usual? Jesus' parable in today's Gospel recounts the lavish celebration of the father who rejoices at the homecoming of his wayward son. We rightly recognize in the father's mercy the abundant forgiveness of our heavenly Father. But have we ever considered what happened the next day? The son, accustomed to his independence and dissolute life, is once again in his father's house. He must live according to his father's rules and demonstrate the sincerity of his repentance by faithfully carrying out his duties. There is work to be done – crops to be harvested, perhaps. As the weeks and months pass without another fatted calf for feasting, the son might ask if his father's love has waned. And although we may sympathize with his unease, the certainty of his father's goodness must be, for the prodigal son and for us, the guarantee of his steadfast love.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

In our relationship with God, we will likely experience moments when our Father's love is keenly felt. Perhaps we will be overwhelmed with peace when we return to him in the sacrament of confession. Perhaps we will be struck by a verse of Scripture during a moment of prayer. But most of our days will look more like the prodigal son's "day after" than the festivities which marked his return. We know, however, that if the weeks that followed were comparatively boring, his father's love had lost none of its warmth or vitality. Similarly, in the days when God seems quiet, when our prayers seem to drift into space or our hearts are distracted with the concerns of everyday life, we must not despair of the Father's love. Nor can we suppose that our happiness can be found outside of his fold. We abide under the care of our Father who lovingly calls us to himself with every circumstance he places before us. To believe this, even when the festivities are over, is to live by faith.

PRAY

With so many opportunities for gratification at our fingertips, it is easy to become restless and to seek happiness in distractions. This week, find an image of Jesus or a Scripture verse about God's love and keep it with you as you work, study, or carry out monotonous tasks. When you're tempted to leave your duties aside out of boredom, take a moment instead to praise and thank God for his love.

