



4th Sunday of Lent

Joshua 5:9-12
Ps 34:2-7
2 Cor 5:17-21
Luke 15:1-3,11-32

Monday March 15

Isaiah 65:17-21
Ps 30:2,4-6,11-13
John 4:43-54

Tuesday March 16

Ezekiel 47:1-9,12
Ps 46:2-3,5-6,8-9
John 5:1-3,5-16

Wednesday March 17

Ezekiel 47:1-9,12
Ps 46:2-3,5-6,8-9
John 5:1-3,5-16

Thursday March 18

Exodus 32:7-14
Ps 106:19-23
John 5:31-47

Friday March 19

St. Joseph

2 Sam 7:4-5,12-14,16
Ps 89:2-5,27,29
Rom 4:13,16-18,22
Matt 1:16,18-21,24
or Luke 2:41-51

Saturday March 20

Jeremiah 11:18-20
Ps 7:2-3,9-12
John 7:40-53

During every Mass, we pray, "Lord, I am not worthy, but say the Word and I shall be healed." Jesus illustrates in Luke 15:1-3,11-32 that we are all worthy, but not because of what we do – rather, it's because of what Jesus *did* do: He died on the cross to take our sins into death that we can be set up with him in the perpetual Easter experience of unity with God.

In the parable of the Prodigal Son, it's not what the son did that made his return home acceptable. It's not his repentance that made him worthy of receiving his father's love. It's what the father did. He loved his child. He loved him even while he was far away, even while he was straying in a sinful lifestyle.

The dad's unconditional, faithful love was his gift to the son even while the son was turning his back on it. The gift that the son gave to

his dad on his return home was an open heart to receive the love that had always been available.

During every Mass, we come to church as prodigal children. It doesn't matter that we think we've been good Christians all week long. In some way or other, we have turned our backs on God's full, unconditional, faithful love. This is why we always start Mass acknowledging that we have sinned. Take this opportunity very seriously.



Next, we listen to the Word that heals our broken relationships with God. Jesus speaks to you through his Holy Spirit; listen in your heart. Jesus, who is the Word made flesh, has already begun to respond to your request that he "say the Word and I shall be healed".

In the Offertory, we offer ourselves to the Father; it's our moment of surrender. The priest says: "I no longer deserve to be called your child, so do with me as you will." What God wills is for us to be restored to a fully loving, give-and-take relationship with him and his family. And thus, in the grandest moment of the Liturgy, we receive the Eucharist as a gift of unity with God and with his whole family. (Those who cannot receive the Communion of the Host and Cup are graced with a Spiritual Communion.)

Reflect & Discuss:

1. In what ways do you feel like a prodigal child? Do you feel separated from God to any degree? What sins do you need to confess so that you can turn around and head back home? Your Father is waiting with open arms!
2. Describe a Prodigal Son type of experience. Did you ever wear the shoes of a child running away from God? What made you decide to return home?
3. How did God receive you back? What convinced you that his love is unconditional and always available?