

March 27, 2022

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

Today we celebrate Laetare (which means “rejoice”) Sunday. As we mark the midpoint of Lent, we allow ourselves to look ahead with joyful anticipation of Jesus’ resurrection, even as we continue our practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Amidst these penitential practices of Lent, this day offers a reminder that we have reason for hope. The parable of the prodigal son shows us what hope looks like. When the father caught sight of his wayward son, he did not see the young man who made bad choices, wasted his inheritance, and disobeyed him. He looked at him with eyes of unconditional love, rejoicing that “he was lost and has been found.” That’s how Jesus viewed the sinners and tax collectors, and how the Father views us, his wayward sons and daughters, when we return to him in contrition and love. So as we continue our Lenten practices, let’s take time to give thanks for the goodness and mercy of God today, knowing that the Lord awaits us with open arms when we acknowledge our sinfulness and rely upon him for all that is good.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Is it me, or are some of the parables hard to figure out? The parable of the prodigal son is one we’ve heard over and over again, and resonates across ages and generations. Some of us may relate to the prodigal son and others to the dutiful brother. The parents and grandparents among us may have been in the father’s shoes at some point. What better time than Lent to reflect on what the story means to us at this point in our lives: Are we awaiting the return of a disaffected loved one? Are we in need of repenting for our own actions? The answer will be different for each of us, but we can rejoice in the fact that we are loved unconditionally by God wherever we are on our Lenten and life journeys. Our challenge is to open our hearts to that love; as we do so, we can’t help but be transformed and in turn share that love with others through friendship, service, and generosity. As St. Paul writes, “Whoever is in Christ is a new creation: The old things have passed away.”

ACT On Laetare Sunday, priests may wear rose-colored vestments as a symbol of joy. Carry this sense of joy into your day by placing roses at the table, bringing flowers to a friend, or calling someone with whom you’ve fallen out of touch.



“The Return of the Prodigal Son,” by Rembrandt, c. 1669, public domain