

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Reading I

[Jos 5:9a, 10-12](#)

The LORD said to Joshua,
“Today I have removed the reproach of Egypt from you.” While the Israelites were encamped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, they celebrated the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth of the month.

On the day after the Passover, they ate of the produce of the land in the form of unleavened cakes and parched grain. On that same day after the Passover, on which they ate of the produce of the land, the manna ceased.

No longer was there manna for the Israelites, who that year ate of the yield of the land of Canaan.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 23: 1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6](#)

R. (9a) **Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the LORD;
the lowly will hear me and be glad.

R. **Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

Glorify the LORD with me,
let us together extol his name.

I sought the LORD, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears.

R. **Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy,
and your faces may not blush with shame.
When the poor one called out, the LORD heard,
and from all his distress he saved him.

R. **Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

Reading II

[2 Cor 5:17-21](#)

Brothers and sisters:

Whoever is in Christ is a new creation:
the old things have passed away;
behold, new things have come.

And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to
himself through Christ and given us the ministry of

reconciliation, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Gospel

[Lk 15:1-3, 11-32](#)

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” So to them Jesus addressed this parable:

“A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, ‘Father give me the share of your estate that should come to me.’ So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation.

When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any.

Coming to his senses he thought, ‘How many of my father’s hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.”’

So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He

ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began.

Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him.

He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.'

He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'

The parable of the prodigal son is the most well known in the gospel of Luke. It is sometimes called 'the gospel in miniature'. Be prepared to spend time with this scripture passage toward the end of Lent. Allow your image of God to be cleared and accept this portrayal of the Father as the truth of what God is really like.

You may find yourself identifying with the younger son, the older son, the 'onlookers', the Father. Consider why a character 'fits' you....

Reflection Questions

- Reading the passages slowly and reflectively, what word, phrase or idea strikes you in the readings? (circle or underline them)
- What do you think God is trying to say to you personally through these words?
- While Moses was a great leader and teacher, the courage of Joshua was needed to face the challenge of entering the 'promised land'. The manna ceased. They were now to work for their food. What change has God been trying to work in you and teach you this Lent?
- St Paul wanted to teach the Corinthian community that faith in Jesus was more than believing one's sins forgiven. God has also given us the ministry of reconciliation in the world. Reconciliation between peoples and with God is a Christians top priority. What relationships need 'reconciling' in your life? Who could you start with?
- In the middle of Lent the Church encourages us to look at our understanding of God with the parable of the prodigal son. It is Jesus teaching us what the Fathers love is really like. The Pharisees were complaining that Jesus did not obey the laws of keeping separate from sinners. Surely God does not want to get 'contaminated' with sinners? What do you honestly think is God's response to your sinfulness? What 'image' do you have of God?
- The young son commits the biggest sin possible for a young Jewish person (asking for the inheritance was like wishing Dad was 'dead'). Yet the father's love does not change. Do you feel distant from God because of something you have done will you accept the love that the Father shows to his child is the same love that is shown to you? Will you accept this love in the sacrament of reconciliation this Lent? What might hold you back?
- The Father does a number of humiliating actions which show the depth of his love. The Father runs in public. It was unbecoming for a Jewish elder to show one's ankles in public. It is the equivalent of 'baring one's bottom'. The crowds attention is now drawn away from the son and the possibility of hurting him. The father accepts the humiliation, in front of the whole community, of the older son angry and argumentative. Does the older son wish the father was dead too? Does anyone appreciate the Fathers love? If this is what God is like toward you what is your response?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?