

Sunday Readings

30th March 2025

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of Joshua 5:9-12

In those days: The LORD said to Joshua, 'Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.' While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 33: 2-7. R/. v.9

R/. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad. **R/.**

Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us praise his name.
I sought the Lord and he answered me;
from all my terrors he set me free. **R/.**

Look towards him and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.
This poor man called, the Lord heard him
and rescued him from all his distress. **R/.**

SECOND READING

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians 5:17-21

Brothers and Sisters: If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ; God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

GOSPEL

Luke 15:1-3. 11-32

The Lord be with you. *And with your Spirit.*
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.
Glory to you, O Lord.

At that time: The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.'

So he told them this parable: 'There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me." And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

'But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'"

'And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son." But the father said to his servants, "Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." And they began to celebrate.

'Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound." But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, "Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!" And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Lectionary Year C

The Word of God

Mothering Sunday



Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son is proof of the divine inspiration of Scripture. It is remarkable both in its simplicity, and in its depth. In a sense, the story has come down to us with an inaccurate name, for Jesus' message is, in fact, a "parable of Divine Mercy," which should not be merely reduced to the father's treatment of his

errant son, but rather considered in light of God's endless compassion. The divine mercy of God, which is illustrated through the father's relation with his two sons, is presented as having both a consoling and a challenging nature.

Let us first take a look at the consoling part of the message, which is the fact that divine mercy transforms the soul. Jesus gives a masterful portrait of the younger son, casually providing details about the prodigal before, during, and after his degradation. In search of freedom, he throws away his sonship and, ironically, becomes a slave. He loses a father, who is replaced by a cold master who does nothing but exploit him, and he loses his Jewish identity, being sent to work with the swine. He even loses something of his very humanity, since his master won't waste the pigs' food on him. After finally hitting rock-bottom, he decides to go back home, and in returning to his father, his degraded soul is transformed. The father's embrace gives him back his lost sonship, while his nakedness is covered with the robe, and his unshod feet, characteristic of slaves, are given new shoes. The ring, a symbol of authority, is put on his finger, and it is clearly seen that the father's love has fully restored his lost son.

But Jesus did not stop the parable there. He kept it going because he wanted to challenge us as well. Divine mercy requires a response. The older son is appalled at the treatment of his brother, and chides his father in pride and self-righteousness, refusing to go into the house. The house, in this case, is a symbol of fellowship and communion with the father. In pursuing his lust, the younger son had been out of the house, and now, ironically, the "good" son is outside the house because of his pride. The father makes clear *that the only way he will be admitted to the house is to forgive his brother*. Taken together, both sons illustrate in their distinctive ways Christ's message in the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Mothering Sunday is the fourth Sunday of Lent. Although it's often called Mothers' Day it has no connection with the American festival of that name.

Traditionally, it was a day when children, mainly daughters, who had gone to work as domestic servants were given a day off to visit their mother and family.

Today it is a day when children give presents, flowers, and home-made cards to their mothers.

History of Mothering Sunday

Most Sundays in the year churchgoers in England worship at their nearest parish or 'daughter church'. Centuries ago it was considered important for people to return to their home or 'mother' church once a year. So each year in the middle of Lent, everyone would visit their 'mother' church - the main church or cathedral of the area.

Inevitably the return to the 'mother' church became an occasion for family reunions when children who were working away returned home. (It was quite common in those days for children to leave home for work once they were ten years old.) And most historians think that it was the return to the 'Mother' church which led to the tradition of children, particularly those working as domestic servants, or as apprentices, being given the day off to visit their mother and family.

As they walked along the country lanes, children would pick wild flowers or violets to take to church or give to their mother as a small gift.

