

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT



Returning to You

Loving God,
you are compassionate and forgiving,
showing us mercy through all time.
We bless you, God of goodness,
for you hear our cry,
and reach out in our distress.
As your holy people,
we ask that you hear our prayer
for a clean heart and a renewed spirit,
so that we may turn back to you
and receive your everlasting peace.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 27, 2022

Lavish and Bountiful Mercy



Today's readings: Joshua 5:9a, 10–12; Psalm 34:2–3, 4–5, 6–7; 2 Corinthians 5:17–21; Luke 15:1–3, 11–32. A loving father with property and some wealth. A son who is steadfast but jealous. A son who is unsettled and wanders. In today's language, the family in the Gospel parable might be called “dysfunctional.”

This family is not very different from today's families whose members exhibit a mix of jealousy, misbehavior, and mercy. After the younger son squanders his inheritance, he returns to his home with humility. The father greets the son, pouring out his love and mercy, and the son's return is celebrated with much feasting. However, the older son, because of

his jealousy, is blinded to his father's goodness, and selfishly questions the father's decisions. This son who has worked hard for his father does not realize what has been right in front of him for his entire life. The father in the story wants to share his wealth and life and love with both of his children, but pride gets in the way for the older son. With humility, the younger son accepts his father's forgiveness.

At times in our lives any of us might act as the younger son, at other times as the older son, and sometimes like the father. God is consistent, always offering unending love and mercy. He always seeks to find the lost and offer life to those once dead to sin.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 28 Seek the Miracle

With faith, the royal official asked Jesus to heal his son. Upon the son's healing, the whole household came to believe. Do you have a request for God? Realize that God is awaiting your petition. Look for Jesus today, for God is creating new heavens and a new earth at every moment. Find a miracle that unfolds for you today, however small, and share that with someone. *Today's readings: Isaiah 65:17–21; Psalm 30:2 and 4, 5–6, 11–12a and 13b; John 4:43–54. Optional for any day this week: Micah 7:7–9; Psalm 27:1, 7–8a, 8b–9abc, 13–14; John 9:1–41.*

Tuesday, March 29 You Are Near

"The Lord of hosts is with us; our stronghold is the God of Jacob," we pray with the psalmist today. The psalm tells of the "astounding things" God has wrought on the earth. In the Gospel, the Lord certainly was with the sick man who had been unable to enter the pool. There we see the God of mercy who restores the man to wholeness. Trusting in God's presence, pray the refrain of today's psalm throughout the day. *Today's readings: Ezekiel 47:1–9, 12; Psalm 46:2–3, 5–6; 8–9; John 5:1–16.*

Wednesday, March 30 So Also the Son

In today's Gospel, Jesus states that "a son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees his father doing." Jesus, the Son, does not do anything except through the power of God. What Jesus knows and sees the Father doing, Jesus will do. Who has taught you how to live as a Christian? Write a letter or call the person to acknowledge and thank them for their example. *Today's readings: Isaiah 49:8–15; Psalm 145:8–9, 13cd–14, 17–18; John 5:17–30.*

Thursday, March 31 Whom Do You Believe?

Many words and images come at us daily. Social media, news outlets, conversations with colleagues and friends flood us with messages. Jesus describes the many witnesses to his identity and power, but his listeners still don't trust all that he has to offer. What helps you believe that Jesus is the Savior? What keeps you focused on his message of truth? Make a point to name and claim that this week. *Today's readings: Exodus 32:7–14; Psalm 106:19–20, 21–22, 23; John 5:31–47.*

Friday, April 1 Ever Close

Have you ever felt brokenhearted? Do you know someone who is? Today's psalm reminds us that God is always close to those in need, to those struggling, and to anyone in distress. Be especially attentive to show kindness to people you meet. Many people are struggling silently. Your compassionate presence will be a sharing of your faith in our loving and merciful God. *Today's readings: Wisdom 2:1a, 12–22; Psalm 34:17–18, 19–20, 21 and 23; John 7:1–2, 10, 25–30.*

Saturday, April 2 Unite in Christ

In today's Gospel, we hear of a division occurring as people argued over whether Jesus is the Christ. Today, many people hostilely debate matters of Christianity. A visible sign of the reign of God is unity, which can be sometimes hard to achieve even in a parish. Talk about unity with your family or a friend and make a commitment to help unite people as the people of God rather than create any further divisions. *Today's readings: Jeremiah 11:18–20; Psalm 7:2–3, 9bc–10, 11–12; John 7:40–53.*

