

REFLECTING ON SUNDAY'S GOSPEL



Repentance. Envy. Joy. Hope. Have you felt these human emotions? Today's Gospel offers a rich story, one we can all find our place in. As we reflect on our own spiritual lives this Lenten season, it can be helpful to imagine ourselves in the story of the Prodigal Son.

"I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers." The younger son has sinned greatly, betraying his father's trust and squandering his money in sin. Yet the parable turns on his deep repentance and humble return to his father. Is there any area of your life you have been wandering from God or you've squandered good gifts? This Lent, return to the sacrament of Confession! God, a merciful Father, waits for you there.

"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." The father in the parable sees his son's selfishness, perhaps even suspects what he might do, but gives him the inheritance anyway. After his son's departure, the father waits with hope for his son's eventual return. Has someone you love left the Church, made poor decisions, or abused your trust? This Lent is a time to let go of bitterness and to live in hope. Prepare your heart to be merciful!

Not all in the parable invite the mercy of God into their hearts. The self-righteous older brother dishonors his father with his pettiness. "My son, you are here with me always, everything I have is yours." Do you covet what others have? Do you feel as if you've been taken advantage of or that your work goes unseen? This Lent is a time to grow in gratitude. Take a close look at the blessings in our life that you might be missing.

We are all called to repentance. Open your heart to God's personal invitation to growth!