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FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

March 31, 2019

“I will go home to my father”

What's worse than being separated from your home, loved ones, and friends? The pain of separation can only be surpassed by the joy of the homecoming and reunion. When God commanded his people to celebrate the Passover annually, he wanted them to never forget what he did for them when he freed them from oppression and slavery in the land of Egypt and brought them back to their promised homeland which he gave as a sign of his immense love and favor. At the end of their wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, Joshua, the successor to Moses, led the people in celebrating the Passover meal after they had safely passed over the River Jordan to their promised homeland.

Jesus illustrates this Passover from slavery to sin and condemnation to freedom and new life in Christ with the longest parable recorded in the Gospels (Luke 15:11-32). What is the main point of Jesus' story about two ungrateful sons and their extravagant loving father? Is it the contrast between a grudging obedient son and a rebellious son who had wished his father was dead? Or the warm reception given to a spendthrift son and the cold reception given by the eldest son?

Jesus does contrast the eldest son's cold and aloof reception for his errant brother with the father's warm embrace and lavish homecoming party for his repentant son. While the errant son had wasted his father's money, his father, nonetheless, maintained unbroken love for his son. The son, while he was away, learned a lot about himself. And he realized that his father had given him love which he had not returned. He had yet to learn about the depth of his father's love for him.

His deep humiliation at finding himself obliged to feed on the husks of pigs and his reflection on all he had lost, led to his repentance and decision to declare himself guilty before his father. While he hoped for reconciliation with his father, he could not have imagined a full restoration of relationship. The father did not need to speak words of forgiveness to his son; his actions spoke more loudly and clearly! The beautiful robe, the ring, and the festive banquet symbolize the new life - pure, worthy, and joyful - of every person who returns to God.

The prodigal could not return to the garden of innocence, but he was welcomed and reinstated as a son who had been missed much and greatly loved by his father. The errant son's dramatic change from grief and guilt to forgiveness and restoration express in picture-language the resurrection from the dead which Jesus makes possible to everyone who believes in him, a rebirth to new life from death. The parable also contrasts mercy and its opposite - disfavour. The father, who had been wronged, was forgiving. But the eldest son, who had not been wronged, was unforgiving. His disfavour turns into spiteful pride and contempt for his brother. God's mercy and kindness knows no bounds. In this parable Jesus gives a vivid picture of God and what God is like. God is truly kinder than any of us. He is always on the lookout for those who have a change of heart and want to return. He rejoices in finding the lost and in welcoming them home. Do you know the joy of repentance and the restoration of relationship as a son or daughter of your heavenly Father?

HOLY WEEK & EASTER MASS SCHEDULE

Holy Thursday April 18 - Mass of the Lord's Supper at 7:30 p.m. followed by Adoration until midnight.

Good Friday April 19 - Passion of the Lord at Noon and 3:00 p.m. with Stations of the Cross at 7:00 p.m.

Holy Saturday April 20 - Blessing of Easter Baskets at 11:00 a.m.

Easter Vigil Saturday April 20 - The Vigil Mass will begin at 8:00 p.m. (Please note that this Mass is about 2 hours in length.)

Easter Sunday April 21 - Resurrection of the Lord 8:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 12:00 noon

LENTEN RECONCILIATION



On April 11 at 7:00 p.m., we will have 6 priests to hear Confessions. Please mark your calendars and plan on going to Confession in preparation for Easter.

Reconciliation is also available at:

St. Joseph's Parish - Mon., April 8 from 7:00 p.m.

Merciful Redeemer - Wed., April 10 from 10-12, 3-5, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

St. Ignatius Loyola - Thur., April 11 at 9:30-11:30 a.m., 4:00-6:00 p.m. & 7:00-8:30 p.m.

St. Christopher - Mon., March 19 from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 1 – 7:00 P.M.

Intention Available

TUESDAY, APRIL 2 – 8:00 A.M.

+ Marie Armstrong

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3 – 7:00 P.M.

Intention Available

THURSDAY, APRIL 4 – 8:00 A.M.

In reparation for offenses committed against the Most Holy Eucharist

FRIDAY, APRIL 5 – 7:00 P.M.

S.I. Hatch Family

SATURDAY, APRIL 6 – 5:00 P.M.

+ Philip Zita

SUNDAY, APRIL 7–5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

8.30 A.M. Intention Available

10:00 A.M. S.I. Parish Community

12:00 P.M. + William James Henry

WOMEN OF THE WORD TORONTO

Women of the Word Toronto invites you to their 10th Anniversary Forum, "Living Truth, Beauty and, Goodness." This year's speakers include Fr. Michael Della Penna, Dr. Josephine Lombardi, and Gizela Cardoso. The event will be emceed by Celeste Giraldo Estrada. April 13 at The Royalton in Woodbridge. Cost is \$60.00 and includes light breakfast and plated lunch. Contact WoW-Toronto at 416-453-0402.

SILENT RETREAT FOR WOMEN

A silent retreat in the Jesuit tradition. Fr. Robert Foliot, SJ, will facilitate the retreat, "What is Pope Francis saying to me?" April 5-7 at Manresa Retreat Centre, Pickering. Suggested offering \$220.00 person. Please call 905-839-2864 for more information.

PLEASE STAY ON THE LINE...

YOUR CALL IS IMPORTANT TO US

While you wait for warmer spring weather and the chance to spend more time in the great outdoors, please consider volunteering in our church gardens. We meet at 9 A.m. on Saturday mornings, but if that time does not work for you, we will accommodate you. All ages are welcome, including high school students who need volunteer hours. We begin our work in April. Now is the time to register. Contact Dolores at 905-822-5297. Your call is important to us! - St. Francis of Assisi Garden Committee



Living the Gospel locally and around the world.

"It is important that we continue to support the ShareLife appeal, to provide for the needs of the marginalized both here in our communities and around the world. Sometimes the results are obvious and sometimes they're invisible, but always they make a tangible difference in the lives of the people we are helping. Please prayerfully consider how you can be supportive today on ShareLife Sunday." — Cardinal Thomas Collins

**Today is ShareLife Sunday.
Thank you for your generosity.**



PARISH LENTEN DEVOTIONS 2019

DAILY MASS: Monday, Wednesday & Friday at 7 p.m., Tuesday & Thursday at 8 a.m.

ROSARY: Monday and Wednesday at 6:40 p.m.

THE CHAPLET OF DIVINE MERCY: Sung on Friday at 3:00 p.m.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Friday evenings at 6:30 p.m.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: 2nd and 4th Friday of every month following the 7 p.m. Mass and Saturday from 4-4:45 p.m.

HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE INFORMATION MEETING



On Wednesday, April 10 at 7:30 p.m. please join us for an

information meeting regarding the Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. You will hear about the 9 day Pilgrimage being led by Fr. Bernard Vellozo from November 8 – 16, 2019. Michael Kwadrans from International Heritage Tours will be present to answer any questions. Please contact the parish office at 905-822-8132 if you wish to attend.

SPRING FLOWER SALE

The Knights of Columbus will begin their spring plant campaign on the weekends of April 6 & 7 and April 27 & 28. Plant pick up will be the Mother's Day weekend May 11 & 12. Please help support the Knights with their many charitable organizations. Thanks for your help and God Bless.



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