

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

March 30, 2025

Gospel: (Luke 15:1-3,11-32)

Jesus told this parable: "A man had two sons, and the younger said to his father, 'Father give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' 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 ...to tend swine. ...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; make me one of your hired servants.'"

Reflection:

It is the father in the parable who models for us the mercy of our heavenly Father. The prodigal son is brought to repentance because he was "dying from hunger." There is nothing he does to deserve the response of the father except to repent and to return. What leads us to decide to repent? Like the prodigal son, "changing our minds" is probably precipitated by some specific catalyst—probably not physical hunger, but possible by spiritual hunger. The penance of Lent can be the external factor that brings us to realize our life is much richer when we turn from our sinful ways and turn to God who gives life.

(Living Liturgy, p.84)

Vincenzian Meditation:

This parable tells us most about the meaning of conversion, and is found in two verbs. The request the younger son makes to his father is this: "Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me." Toward the end of the parable, when the younger son returns home, the request he makes of his father is this: "Father, make me one of your hired servants." Between the "give me" at the beginning and the "make me" at the end lies the story of conversion. There is an altogether different attitude of mind expressed in the "give me my money" and "make me one of your hired servants." In the story of conversion you will find that the starting point is a selfish demand, and the finishing point is a readiness to be a servant. (McCullen, Deep Down Things, p.698)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts after a moment of silence)

Have you experienced a conversion from "give me" to "make me your servant?"

Closing Prayer:

As we abandon ourselves to God's will,

-Father, we come to you.

As we allow prayer to change our lives,

-Father, we come to you.

As we move from "give me" to "make me your servant,"

-Father, we come to you.

Amen

