

Formed in Prayer



Let us be still
and ask the Holy Spirit to be with us.

Dear Father, be with us as we pray.
Open our ears to hear your Word in the Gospel.
Unite us in faith, hope and love as we pray together.
Send your Holy Spirit to inspire
and sustain us in our mission.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Gospel

Luke 15:1-32

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained. ‘This man’ they said ‘welcomes sinners and eats with them.’ So he spoke this parable to them:

‘What man among you with a hundred sheep, losing one, would not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the missing one till he found it? And when he found it, would he not joyfully take it on his shoulders and then, when he got home, call together his friends and neighbours? “Rejoice with me,” he would say “I have found my sheep that was lost.” In the same way, I tell you, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine virtuous men who have no need of repentance. ‘Or again, what woman with ten drachmas would not, if she lost one, light a lamp and sweep out the house and search thoroughly till she found it? And then, when she had found it, call together her friends and neighbours? “Rejoice with me,” she would say “I have found the drachma I lost.” In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one repentant sinner.’ He also said, ‘A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, “Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me.” So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery.

‘When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. Then he came to his senses and said, “How many of my father’s paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants.” So he left the place and went back to his father.

‘While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. Then his son said, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.” But the father said to his servants, “Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found.” And they began to celebrate.

‘Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. “Your brother has come” replied the servant, “and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back safe and sound.” He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him; but he answered his father, “Look, all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. But, for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property – he and his women – you kill the calf we had been fattening.” The father said, “My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found.”’

*What words or phrases struck you in Sunday’s Gospel reading?
What might God be prompting you to consider or inviting you to do in and through the Gospel?*

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Reflection

Have you ever suspected that people might be muttering or complaining about your decisions or actions as a leader? Have you ever been compared disparagingly to a previous leader?

In comparing John the Baptist and his followers, who fast and pray, with Jesus and his disciples, who feast with sinners, the religious leaders and teachers come to the conclusion that Jesus is just “a drunkard and a glutton”. (Luke 7:34-36)

In the three parables of the Lost, which Luke constructs as just one parable, there is an explanation and a challenge for the religious leaders and teachers... and by the way... isn't that us? Jesus is about God's work of gathering the lost and forsaken... He has aligned himself completely with God's mission of hospitality to the fallen, those rejected by the world.

Pope Francis constantly invites us to rediscover the 'joy of the gospel', the joy of table fellowship with the poor, the sick, the marginalised. I'm left wondering; Who sits at my table? If the losers, the down and out have never been welcome at my table, in my home, parish or school whilst alive, why would I ever want to spend eternity with them at the Lord's table? (*Greg Wilson, CSYMA Manager*)

Prayer

God our Father,
Help us to embrace those who have fallen, made mistakes in their life.
Fill us with your compassion and joy
so that we are empowered to continue the mission you have called us to.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.