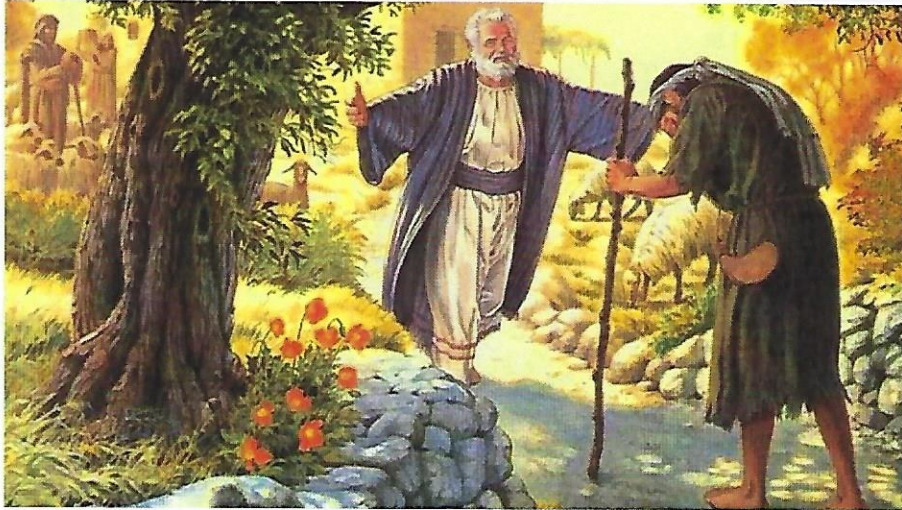


March 31, 2019

Fourth Week of Lent

The Prodigal Son



Readings for the week of March 31, 2019

Sunday: Jos 5:9a, 10-12/Ps 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7 [9a]/2 Cor 5:17-21/
Lk 15:1-3, 11-32

Monday: Is 65:17-21/Ps 30:2 and 4, 5-6, 11-12a and 13b [2a]/Jn
4:43-54

Tuesday: Ez 47:1-9, 12/Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9 [8]/Jn 5:1-16

Wednesday: Is 49:8-15/Ps 145:8-9, 13cd-14, 17-18 [8a]/Jn 5:17-
30

Thursday: Ex 32:7-14/Ps 106:19-20, 21-22, 23 [4a]/Jn 5:31-47

Friday: Wis 2:1a, 12-22/Ps 34:17-18, 19-20, 21 and 23 [19a]/Jn
7:1-2, 10, 25-30

Saturday: Jer 11:18-20/Ps 7:2-3, 9bc-10, 11-12 [2a]/Jn 7:40-53

Next Sunday: Is 43:16-21/Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6 [3]/Phil 3:8-14/
Jn 8:1-11

*“Now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again;
He was lost and has been found.”*

Luke 15:32

A Divine Sense of Extravagance

4th Week of Lent – Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32

Jerome Kodell, O.S.B., scripture scholar and theologian states in one of his biblical commentaries that the story of the prodigal son is *“probably the most famous of Jesus’ parables. Besides being a classic of spiritual insight, it is a literacy jewel. Through this story Jesus illustrates the earth-shattering acceptance available in the kingdom of God.”*

I was taken by Kodell’s notion of earth-shattering acceptance. What Kodell says is that *“the story is about a father and two sons, and its pivot is the father’s prodigality in love to both of his sons rather than the younger son’s wastefulness of worldly goods.”*

Prodigality is not a word that I’d use in my daily conversations. It does, however, strike me as appropriate to the lesson for this week. Prodigality means excessive or extravagant spending. In the gospel this week, Jesus is attempting to explain that God lavishly and wastefully spends his love on us.

This story of two sons, one who is faithful and true but is filled with indignant righteousness, and the other son who rejects all that the father has to offer, squanders his inheritance. He finally crawls back home hoping for a servant’s life. The father’s response is complete forgiveness and acceptance of this beloved child. This is the pure example of lavish and extravagant love spent on those who do not deserve it. It is the pure example of mercy, given in Divine extravagance.

If I consider my own life, I realize how much God has lavished the Divine love and mercy upon me. I then must ask myself: How many times have I wasted the precious gifts and blessings bestowed on me in this life? How often have I been jealous of the gifts and blessings others have received, indignant that my righteous opinion or lifestyle is better than others?

This week we are called not only to accept this Divine extravagance but to also expend it on others. Can we be as joyful at the return of one who is lost? Or are we more focused on what we don’t have, how someone else got the better deal and how we will forever be bitter? Technically, we never hear in the story how the second son finally responds to his Father. I guess Jesus leaves us with a choice as to how we will respond to him.

Happy Lent!



Sue Schettler