



Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
September 11, 2022

Sonship Restored

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Strangely enough and discouragingly often, we find the attitude of the older son in the Church. The righteous believers who have always belonged can be jealous and look down upon the poor sinner who comes at a later hour, receiving the same reward.

Yet, the attitude of all of us towards those who are spiritually, morally, or materially needy, should be that of the loving father in today's gospel. The sinner comes back in shame, weakness, and obvious failure. His very act of returning is a cry for help, support,

and understanding. The Father offers his mercy and compassion without questions, without an interrogation. His shoulder is never too proud, too hard or righteous to be refused as a pillow for the humiliated soul who returns ruined by sin.

Humanity is noblest when admitting its weakness. Humanity is greatest in its ability to show mercy and lift the downtrodden. The parent-child relationship is most beautiful when it is being reconciled and restored.

We should always rejoice at the return of a prodigal child and we should always honor a forgiving parental heart. "We must celebrate and rejoice," said the father in the gospel. If we are convinced of this, we now have a charge: Be prepared to forgive those who have hurt us. Be ready to open our hearts and our arms to embrace those who are seeking our acceptance, our understanding, our love. +

Sunday Readings

Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14

Moses implored the LORD... "Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Israel..." So the LORD relented in the punishment he had threatened to inflict on his people.

1 Timothy 1:12-17

Indeed, the grace of our Lord has been abundant, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Luke 15:1-32

While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion.

A Word from Pope Francis

When someone whose heart is synchronized with God's sees the repentance of a person, they rejoice, no matter how serious their mistakes may have been. They do not stay focused on errors, they do not point fingers at what they have done wrong, but rejoice over the good because another person's good is mine as well!

ANGELUS, ROME, MARCH 27, 2022



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- With whom do you most identify in the Gospel story: the sinful son, the jealous brother, or the loving father?
- Explain your selection.

Let God Out of the Box

By Fr. Rick Potts, CSsR

Christians believe that God is infinite and eternal, God stands outside the bounds of space and time. God is omnipotent, omnipresent, omnibenevolent, and omniscient. God is, as one of my favorite gospel songs says, “awesome.”

And yet, we often squeeze our infinite God into tiny boxes. I guess it's inevitable. It's pretty tough to visualize something that's beyond our understanding, hard to get a handle on the infinite. And there's nothing wrong with contemplating God in bite-sized portions—it's just that it becomes so easy to deny everything that doesn't fit into our little box.

Some insist God is male and deny any other possibility. The artwork of our Catholic tradition has so often portrayed God as an older white male that artwork portraying God in any other fashion is seen as false. It's very hard to get God out of that little box. The language we use to describe God in our liturgies is masculine, and any attempt to use feminine pronouns is usually met with hostility even though Catholic theology teaches us that to do so is perfectly acceptable (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 370). If God is truly all things, what's wrong with painting God as a young, black female?

Others have placed God in a box that restricts God's mercy. Each of us can probably think of a couple people we can't imagine being allowed into



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paradise for one reason or another. We build a box out of justice (our definition) and seal it with self-righteousness, imagining it will hinder the flow of God's limitless mercy to those we deem unworthy.

Some even limit God's mercy as it applies to themselves. God loves me whether I believe it or not, but not believing it greatly limits the effect God's love has on my life. Imagine yourself

drowning in the ocean. You've gone under twice; it's dark, and you're scared. Someone throws you a life preserver, but it lands behind you and you don't see it. To you, it doesn't exist. So even though it's only a few feet away, it cannot save your life, and you drown. Just so, if I deny God's mercy, then for all intents and purposes it doesn't exist in my universe.

The same is true if I deny God's love. It cannot help define who I am. It cannot change the opinion I have of myself. It cannot save me from myself. If we imagine that God acts and reasons the same way we do, we fail to see God's love and mercy that surround us. Shall we open ourselves to the wonder and mystery that is God? Shall we let God out of the box?



Merciful God, mindful of how much we are forgiven, please give us the grace to forgive those who have hurt us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

September 12–17

Monday, Weekday:

1 Cor 11:17–26, 33 / Lk 7:1–10

Tuesday, St. John Chrysostom:

1 Cor 12:12–14, 27–31a / Lk 7:11–17

Wednesday, Exaltation of the Holy Cross:

Nm 21:4b–9 / Phil 2:6–11 / Jn 3:13–17

Thursday, Our Lady of Sorrows:

1 Cor 15:1–11 / Jn 19:25–27 or Lk 2:33–35

Friday, Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian:

1 Cor 15:12–20 / Lk 8:1–3

Saturday, Weekday:

1 Cor 15:35–37, 42–49 / Lk 8:4–15

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