

Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 31, 2019

Christ the Good Shepherd, ORCC

Reflection by Father Charles Blanchard

First Reading: Joshua 5a:10-12

Psalm:

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

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

Today, March 31, 2019 is an amazing day where you and I gather to hear God's Word and feast at this Table where there is no partiality. It's equally amazing to me as I embrace this privilege of celebrating this Fourth Sunday of Lent as you're your friend, advocate and priest in-spite of my imperfections and challenges.

Welcome Home!

Today's Gospel from Luke is usually often times referred to as the "Parable of the Prodigal Son." For the sake of our reflection this day, let's think about this story as **The Block Party of the Century** wherein you and I see anew God's extravagant Peace and Love poured out **lavishly, wastefully, and extravagantly.**

Think about it:

- What sinner (like you and me) wouldn't love to hear how, no matter what he did, this guy's father not only welcomed him home, but threw what must have been the Block Party of the Century;
- This is a beautiful story;
- But Jesus' amazingly "action-packed" story reveals to us that it's not this reckless son who is the truly prodigal one;

When looking at the word prodigal, it is defined as a person who spends resources in a wastefully extravagant way. The Latin root is prodigus, which means lavish.

My sisters and brothers, when you and I take a moment to truly look at the story, we'll find the father in this parable giving freely to his son not only his money, or his food, but his unending care; his unending peace; and his unending love!

Recall Luke's Gospel: "While he was still a long way off, he caught sight of him and was moved with compassion." (Lk 15:20).

My sisters and brothers, this parent squandered the fortune of himself as he, lavishly, wastefully, and extravagantly, would let his love flow out like a flood washing over his son, a sinner who returned home! **The**

truly “prodigal” one is not the son... it’s the Father, and that image of God is so beautiful!

There’s even more to **The Block Party of the Century**: The older son is upset! He doesn’t understand why the father is so forgiving of his evil little brother.

- Wow, I can identify with that;
- Why be so lenient;
- The younger brother got exactly what he asked for and, not respecting it, thoughtlessly squandered it all; and
- How incredibly silly of him!

But, again, it’s the Father’s response which hits you and me like a ton of bricks.

Recall Luke’s Gospel: “Everything I have is yours.” He, without reservation, still gives and loves and supports, no matter what.

No matter what!

My sisters and brothers, if you and I were to look in the mirror, which of these three images would apply?

- Could it be the wasteful son?
- ***Sometimes, yes.***

- Or, the older son, who is faithful and serving always?
- ***Hopefully a little more often than the other, yes, but still – sometimes;*** or
- Perhaps, it could even be the Father, loving so deeply that he would unreservedly and with reckless abandon give every little bit of himself to those he loves?
- ***Yes – We’ve felt that sometimes too even to our own peril!***

My sisters and brothers, this **Block Party of the Century** leaves us with questions which must be contemplated or answered during Lent...

- How have I been wasteful and negligent with the gifts I’ve been given;
- How many times have I squandered not love, but hate – or turned my back on someone that hurt me;
- How easily do I forgive, forget and move on from painful life experiences given God’s Peace and Love; and
- Do I even give at all of my time, talents and treasures?

May our prayer be:

Prodigal God, thank you for squandering your most amazing Peace and Love on us, no matter what!

Please grant us the grace to be the Prodigal one – let me run to, greet, embrace, and throw my forgiveness and love over everyone, as we start on the road home to You, together.

Gracias de Dios para todos; God's grace be with all of us!

Amen