

Reflecting On Sunday's Readings

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT—March 31, 2019

First Reading — Joshua 5:9-12

⁹ And the LORD said to Joshua, “This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day.

¹⁰ While the people of Israel were encamped in Gilgal they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at evening in the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ And on the morrow after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² And the manna ceased on the morrow, when they ate of the produce of the land; and the people of Israel had manna no more, but ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

Responsorial Psalm PS 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7.

R. (9a) **Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the LORD;
the lowly will hear me and be glad.

R. **Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

Glorify the LORD with me,
let us together extol his name.

I sought the LORD, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears.

R. **Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy,
and your faces may not blush with shame.
When the poor one called out, the LORD heard,
and from all his distress he saved him.

R. **Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

Second Reading — 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the

new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Gospel Reading — Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

¹ Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. ² And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

³ So he told them this parable: ...

¹¹ And he said, “There was a man who had two sons; ¹² and the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.’ And he divided his living between them.

¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living.

¹⁴ And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. ¹⁵ So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶ And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer

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worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.”²⁰ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.²¹ And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’²² But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet;²³ and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry;²⁴ for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to make merry.

²⁵ “Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.²⁶ And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant.²⁷ And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.’²⁸ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him,²⁹ but he answered his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends.³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!’³¹ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.³² It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God...

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

First Reading — Joshua 5:9-12

1. What does this passage teach about celebrating reconciliation?

Second Reading — 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

2. What are the key components to the message of reconciliation?

Gospel Reading — Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

3. Which son best illustrates your journey?
4. How do we, who are Catholic Christians, avoid embracing, and communicating, an attitude similar to that of the elder brother?
5. What does this passage teach us about our Heavenly Father? About reconciliation?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with a final prayer.