

Valencia Lenten Mission 2013

WITNESSING TO THE FAITH - RETURNING HOME....Luke 15: 11-32

Talk #1 – The Light of Life, the Light of Faith

By Br. Kyle Dardaine CTC

So we begin tonight with the familiar story of the Prodigal Son which we hear every year but we want to reflect on this parable from a slightly different angle these 3 nights together. We want to take a journey with each of the characters of the Prodigal story over this retreat. We want to examine the call to Faith expressed in each character. So tonight we begin with the 1st character being the Father. So I ask you tonight to listen deeply to the character of the Father. As the reading is proclaimed please pay particular attention to the movements taking place with the Father character in the story.

READ TEXT...

- Parable telling: Joke about parables from Fr. Jubrasingh, Jesus is a trini... Jesus uses parables to teach us about His Father, about our lives and about life in His Father's Kingdom.
 - Tradition and biblical scholars say in this parable Jesus uses the Father to teach us about His Father, our Father in heaven. So let's allow Jesus to teach us about God our Father tonight and his role in this life of faith we are called to.
1. Firstly, the Father had two sons. He made or created two sons. The first indestructible truth that we need to encounter is that God our Father is Creator. He created heaven and earth and more importantly he created you and I. In the old catechism we were taught to question, "who made me?" and the Church says the one who believes responds "God made me". So therefore my life is created, designed, fashioned, ordered, and purposed toward God. And it stands to reason that since God created me, that my very humanity is configured and wired for immersion in God.

- a. That's why the psalmist can proclaim to God in the temple, *"You created my inmost self, knit me together in my mother's womb. For so many marvels I thank you; a wonder am I, and all your works are wonders. You knew me through and through, my being held no secrets from you, when I was being formed in secret, textured in the depths of the earth."* Psalm 139 and then again, *"Oh God, my God for you I long, for you my soul is thirsting, My body pines for you like a dry, weary land without water"*. Psalm 62
- b. In his letter on this year of faith, Porta Fidei, His Holiness Benedict 16 makes reference to the significance of St Augustine's life-long quest for the true beauty of life and for the significance of faith until he collapsed to the realization *"that our hearts are restless until they find rest in God."*
- c. Both the Psalmist and Benedict are pointing to the reality that faith has its humble beginnings in the belief that God in creating each one of us has breathed the Light of Life in us. We carry the mark of our creator in us; the very life within us is a spark of the Light of God.
- d. John 1: 3-4 *"Through him all things came into being, not one thing came into being except through him. What has come into being in him was life, life that was the light of men"*
- e. God the Father so configured us to himself brothers and sisters, he made us in His image and likeness, your life is a light the Father has given to the world as a gift...to be the light of men.
- f. Therefore friends this is Good News. God we know cannot do evil and so no matter how you feel some days, no matter what circumstances you were born into or if your parents said you were a mistake and things of the like; God does not make trash! God creates sparks of himself, he made you in his image and likeness and God

says you are Light, therefore you are...? Light, yes you are. Consider that scientist in a recent study of the anatomy was able to find light emanating from the body when placed in an ultra-dark photo room. In fact the study shows that each human life emanates at least one photo neuron of light from the activity of our cells in our body. The study showed samples of pics of when those persons died and after a short time the light was no longer captured by photos. Isn't that fabulous and mind blowing? We are born of Light, the light of life has been given to us, we are destined to be light.

(SONG-IF THE LORD SAYS I AM LIGHT, THEN I AM..)

2. The son asks the Father for his share of the inheritance. He wants his portion of the estate that was meant for him. Do you know that unlike the son in this parable we do not need to beg the Father for our inheritance? Are you aware that you have been given a share in God's Kingdom already? In the story the Father willfully and freely gives what he owns to the son, he pours out on him everything that he will need for his journey throughout life.
 - a. Just as with the son, the Father has already given us all that he owns and possesses. When did that happen? When did God give us our share of His property and make us heirs of the great inheritance? That's right, at our baptism. Going back to the year of faith message, our Holy Father says, "to enter through that door is to set out on a journey that lasts a lifetime. It begins with baptism (cf. Rom 6:4), through which we can address God as Father, and it ends with the passage through death to eternal life, fruit of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, whose will it was, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, to draw those who believe in him into his own glory (cf. Jn 17:22)."
 - b. The Church says at baptism "The Light of faith" has been poured out on us. So at our Baptism, the Father comes to us with the Son and through the power of the H. S. he lavishes upon us at the moment of our baptism the right of our inheritance, to call him Father.

(SING: Behold what manner of Love the Father has given unto us)

- c. Yes brothers and sisters, at Baptism, you and I were configured to Christ and so we became heirs and coheirs with Christ to the Kingdom of Faith, the Kingdom of glory, the kingdom of heaven. We inherited the title “sons and daughters of God”.
 - d. The Catechism of the Church says, “a seal has been set upon us”, “an indelible spiritual mark is placed on us” and the light of faith has been poured into us.
3. So if God made you and me in his image and likeness and we were already given the light of life, why did we need the light of faith? Anyone? The answer is in another story in Genesis. See our forefathers a long time ago who were given the brightest spark of the light of Life chose in one great act of rebellion to question the Father’s intention and motives. They chose to mistrust the Father and to consider making the journey according to their own way. And there we have sin, entering the picture. As a result our lives have been marked by ‘concupiscence’ a big word to mean the capacity to want to try the journey our way instead of the way of the Father. *Refer to the younger son. Because of this tendency the odds of us ever ending the journey where we began, where we supposed to end would be very small and in many cases impossible. *Penny catechesim – ‘to be happy with him in the next’
4. So the Father had to change the odds somehow. He loves us so much he could not bear knowing that due to this one great fall that so many of us would never be able to return home. John 3 vs 16:

(SING) For God so loved the sinful world that he sent his only...

So the Father came up with the plan, send my son, into the world, to suffer and die for them and he will restore their light of life, with the Light of faith. When the Light of Christ enters a soul, he changes the destiny of that soul immediately and sets its course for the Kingdom of the Father and that is what he did for you and I brothers and sisters.

CCC 163 *“By Baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin. In those who have been reborn nothing remains that would impede their entry into the Kingdom of God, neither Adam's sin, nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God.*

CCC 165 *“Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte “a new creature,” an adopted son of God, who has become a “partaker of the divine nature,” member of Christ and coheir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit”*

5. So this now sheds light on the final posture of the Father we want to reflect on tonight. Here I mean the character of the Father who is waiting, looking out for his son...why? The text says he saw him from far off coming and he ran out to greet him. Brothers and sisters the Father in the Gospel prefigures our Father because he knows that no matter how far we stray or run or get distracted that he already lavished the Light of faith upon us. He knows he has already sealed us with the sign of the Kingdom, we carry an indelible mark, cannot be removed. So in the character we learn today of our Father that he never condemns us, **NOOOO!** God waits for us brothers and sisters, he sits looking out because he knows the light of life once renewed and rekindled by the Light of faith becomes like a compass that guides us back home. You see Benedict refers to Baptism and says *“it is like a great compass that always guides us back to the North Star, Christ who guides us home to a safe harbor.”*
6. Do you feel that compass in you brothers and sisters? Do you feel that burning light in you leading you ever closer to the Father, calling you from deep to return to the Father? Sometimes we go astray and we lose our way, sin sets us off the course and we don't know where home is located at that point. All we have to do is be open once again to the Light of faith we were given at Baptism, it's the “fail safe” gadget on your vessel, it will never

steer us off course. In fact it brings us back on course till we are at home safe with the Father.

7. Close your eyes and place your hand on your heart. Can you feel the compass ticking? Can you feel the indestructible mark of God inside you wanting to take you home? Home is where we belong, brothers and sisters! It is only when we are at home, living the light of life in the light of faith that life finds its true meaning and finds its true happiness. Feel the beat of your heart and the thrust of the compass pulling you home to safe harbor, at home in the warmth of the Father's arms.

(SING- Come back to Me)