



Father of Mercies: A Lenten Retreat Guide on the Parable of the Prodigal Son

We are all familiar with the Gospel parable of the Prodigal Son—at least, we are familiar with one part of it. We all remember how the younger brother in the parable demanded to receive his inheritance before his father died, and then went off and squandered that inheritance in sinful living. When he had nothing left, he humbly came back to his father’s house, and instead of being punished for his selfishness he was welcomed with a celebration.

That’s what we remember about this parable. We all agree that it’s a good story. But is it really meant for all of us? Is it just a parable for really big sinners who do terrible things?

No, because Jesus told this parable to the Pharisees, who were supposed to be the most faithful and religious people in Israel. The very word, Pharisee, means “separate”, in the sense of being superior in righteousness to the others.

So why would Jesus tell them the parable about the prodigal son? There are a lot of reasons, and most of them have an important, refreshing, and inspiring message for us too! This mini-retreat will explore that message.

- The first meditation will focus on the hidden hero of this parable, the father who shows mercy to both of his sons.
- The second meditation will look at the human relationship between God’s mercy and Christian Joy.
- We will conclude with a look at some practical things we can all do to live that joy more deeply.

OUR LADY OF THE VISITATION CATHOLIC CHURCH
Saturday, March 9, 2019 (first Saturday of the Season of Lent)
9 a.m. to 11 a.m.