

## Fourth Sunday in Lent c



*Entrance Antiphon:*     **Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her.**  
                                  **Be joyful, all who were in mourning;**  
                                  **exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast. Is 66:10-11**

'Father I have sinned against heaven and before you'. So said the prodigal son whose story we hear in today's Gospel. At the start of this Eucharist we are invited to make our own the words and sentiments of the prodigal son.

Lord Jesus, you reconcile us to one another.	Lord, have mercy.
You heal the wounds of sin and division.	Christ, have mercy.
You intercede for us with the Father.	Lord, have mercy.

Let us pray:

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### FIRST READING

A reading from the book of Joshua.

Joshua 5:9-12

The Lord said to Joshua: 'Today I have taken the shame of Egypt away from you.'

The Israelites pitched their camp at Gilgal and kept the Passover there on the fourteenth day of the month, at evening in the plain of Jericho. On the morrow of the Passover they tasted the produce of that country, unleavened bread and roasted ears of corn, that same day. From that time, from their first eating of the produce of that country, the manna stopped falling. And having manna no longer, the Israelites fed from that year onwards on what the land of Canaan yielded.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 33

**Response:     Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

I will bless the Lord at all times,  
his praise always on my lips;  
in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.  
The humble shall hear and be glad.

**Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

Glorify the Lord with me.  
Together let us praise his name.  
I sought the Lord and he answered me;  
from all my terrors he set me free.

**Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

Look towards him and be radiant;  
let your faces not be abashed.  
This poor man called; the Lord heard him  
and rescued him from all his distress.

**Taste and see that the Lord is good.**

### SECOND READING

A reading from St Paul's second letter to the Corinthians.

2 Cor 5:17-21

And for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and now the new one is here. It is all God's work. It was God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on this reconciliation. In other words, God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not holding men's faults against them, and he has entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled. So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal

that we make in Christ's name is: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness of God.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

**Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory.  
I will leave this place and go to my father and say:  
'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.'  
Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory.**

GOSPEL

Luke 15:1-3.11-32

The Lord be with you

**And with your spirit**

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you Lord**

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained. 'This man' they said 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he spoke this parable to them:

'A man had two sons. The younger said to his father: "Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me." So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery.

When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. Then he came to his senses and said: "How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants." So he left the place and went back to his father.

While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly. Then his son said: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son." But the father said to his servants: "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it: we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life: he was lost and is found." And they began to celebrate.

Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. "Your brother has come" replied the servant "and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back safe and sound." He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him: but he answered his father: "Look, all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. But, for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property - he and his women - you kill the calf we had been fattening."

The father said: "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life: he was lost and is found."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

*The Apostles' Creed*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.**

*Offertory:*

Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

**May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

*Prayer over the Offerings:*

We place before you with joy these offerings, which bring eternal remedy, O Lord, praying that we may both faithfully revere them and present them to you, as is fitting, for the salvation of all the world. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Preface:*

The Lord be with you.

Lift up your hearts.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.  
For you have given your children a sacred time  
for the renewing and purifying of their hearts,  
that, freed from disordered affections,  
they may so deal with the things of this passing world  
as to hold rather to the things that eternally endure.  
And so, with all the Angels and Saints,  
we praise you, as without end we acclaim:

**And with your spirit  
We lift them up to the Lord  
It is right and just**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

The mystery of faith: **Save us, Saviour of the world,  
for by your Cross and Resurrection  
you have set us free.**

*Communion Antiphon:* **You must rejoice, my son, for your brother was dead  
and has come to life; he was lost and is found.**

*Luke 15:32*

REFLECTION

Loved in Our sins

The prodigal son came home empty-handed. He had no trophies to show his father, no achievements with which to earn his praise, his welcome, and his love. He was a failure. Worse - he was a sinner. He deserved to be punished - and he knew it. Yet punishment was the last thing he needed. To punish him would be like pouring water on a dying fire. What happened?

When the father saw his lost Son coming towards him, his heart went out to him, and the next minute they were in each other's arms. It is an extraordinary experience to be loved in one's sinfulness. Such love is like a breeze to a dying fire, rain falling on parched ground. Those who have experienced this kind of love, know something about the heart of God.

*Prayer after Communion:*

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world, illuminate our hearts, we pray, with the splendour of your grace, that we may always ponder what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty and love you in all sincerity. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Final Blessing*

The Lord be with You

May almighty God bless you,

the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

**And with your spirit**

**Amen**

**Thanks be to God**