



**St. John's Parish**  
Roman Catholic Church

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# WHEN I BECAME A PARENT, I UNDERSTOOD GOD

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT - MARCH 30, 2025

The Gospel for this Sunday's Liturgy recounts the so-called Parable of the Prodigal Son (cf. Lk 15:11-32). It leads us to the heart of God, who always forgives compassionately and tenderly. Always, God always forgives. We are the ones who tire of asking for forgiveness, but he always forgives. It [the parable] tells us that God is a Father who not only welcomes us back, but rejoices and throws a feast for his son who has returned home after squandering all his possessions. We are that son, and it is moving to think about how much the Father always loves us and waits for us.

But there is also the elder son in the same parable who manifested his resentment in front of this Father. It can put us into crisis as well. In fact, this elder son is also within us and we are tempted to take his side, at least in part: he had always done his duty, he had not left home, and so he becomes indignant on seeing the Father embracing his [other] son again after having behaved so badly. He protests and says: "I have served you for so many years and never disobeyed your command". Instead, for "this son of yours", you go so far as to celebrate! "I don't understand you!" This is the indignation of the elder son.

These words illustrate the elder son's problem. He bases his relationship with his Father solely on pure observance of commands, on a sense of duty. This could also be our problem, the problem among ourselves and with God: losing sight that he is a Father, and living a distant religion, made of prohibitions and duties. And the consequence of this distance is rigidity towards our neighbour whom we no longer see as a brother or sister. In fact, in the parable, the elder son does not say my brother to the Father. No, he says that son of yours, as if to say: he is not my brother. In the end, he risks remaining outside of the house. In fact, the text says: "he refused to go in", because the other one was there.

Seeing this, the Father goes out to plead with him: "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours". He tries to make him understand that for him, every child is all of his life. Parents know this well and are very close to feeling like God does. Something a father says in a novel is very beautiful: "When I became a father, I understood God". At this point in the parable, the Father opens his heart to his elder son and expresses two needs, which are not commands, but essentials for his heart: "It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive". Let us see if we too have in our hearts these two things the Father needs: to make merry and rejoice.

First of all, to make merry, that is, to demonstrate our closeness to those who repent or who are on the way, to those who are in crisis or who are far away. Why should we do this? Because this helps to overcome the fear and discouragement that can come from remembering one's sins. Those who have made mistakes often feel reproached in their own hearts. Distance, indifference and harsh words do not help. Therefore, according to the Father, we have to offer them a warm welcome that encourages them to go ahead. "But father, he did so many things": a warm welcome. And we, do we do this? Do we look for those who are far away? Do we want to celebrate with them? How much good an open heart, true listening and a transparent smile can do; to celebrate, not to make them feel uncomfortable! The Father could have said: "Okay, son, come back home, come back to work, go to your room, establish yourself and your work! And this would have been a good way to forgive. But no! God does not know how to forgive without celebrating! And the Father celebrates because of the joy he has because his son has returned.

And then, like the Father, we have to rejoice. When someone whose heart is synchronized with God's sees the repentance of a person, they rejoice, no matter how serious their mistakes may have been. They do not stay focused on errors, they do not point fingers at what they have done wrong, but rejoice over the good because another person's good is mine as well! And we, do we know how to look at others like this?

I would like to recount a fictional story, but one that helps illustrate the heart of the father. There was a pop theatre production, three or four years ago, about the prodigal son, with the entire story. And at the end, when that son decides to return to his father, he talks about it with a friend and says: "I'm afraid my father will reject me, that he won't forgive me". And the friend advises him: "Send a letter to your father and tell him, 'Father, I have repented, I want to come back home, but I'm not sure that you will be happy. If you want to welcome me, please put a white handkerchief in the window'". And then he began his journey. And when he was near home, at the last bend in the road, he had the house in view. And what did he see? Not one handkerchief: it was full of white handkerchiefs, the windows, everywhere! The Father welcomes us like this, completely, joyfully. This is our Father!

Do we know how to rejoice for others? May the Virgin Mary teach us how to receive God's mercy so that it might become the light by which we see our neighbours.

POPE FRANCIS — March 27, 2022

**WE CONTINUE TO PRAY WITH THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH**, for the well-being of Pope Francis!

**Mass & Sacrament of Reconciliation on Weekdays:** From Tuesday April 1<sup>st</sup> to Thursday April 3<sup>rd</sup> there will be not Daily Mass (11am) and Reconciliation (11.30am). *The regular schedule will be back on Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup>.*

**No habrá celebración de Misas DURANTE LA SEMANA (12pm)** desde el martes 1 de abril hasta el jueves 3 de abril inclusive.  
Tampoco habrá confesiones a las 11:30am.  
*Reiniciará el viernes 4 de abril.*

**This Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup>** the **Stations of the Cross will be prayed at 10am** in English and Eucharistic Adoration will start at 10:30am, concluding with Benediction before the 11am Mass.

**JOURNEYING THROUGH LENT** continues with the video presentation for the Third Sunday of Lent. It is available on the CCCB website, or can be easily accessed [here](#).

### **Viernes Primero del Mes (4 de abril)**

Se rezará el Viacrucis a las 11:30am

El Santísimo Sacramento se expondrá para adoración silenciosa después de la Misa de 12:00 pm hasta las 2:00 pm y nuevamente a partir de las 5:00 hasta las 7:00 p.m.

A las 6pm se tendrá una Hora Santa, que concluirá con la Bendición con el Santísimo a las 7pm.

Durante el tiempo de la Exposición del Santísimo se ofrecerá el sacramento de Reconciliación.

### **RETIRO DE PREPARACIÓN PARA LA SEMANA SANTA (EN ESPAÑOL)**

Sábado 5 de abril de 10:00 am a 12:00 pm, aquí en la parroquia.

### **ENGLISH SCHEDULE**

#### **Fourth Sunday of Lent**

Saturday, March 29, 2025 **5:00 PM**  
+Nicola Scarfone & Morabito Family

Sunday, March 30, 2025 **9:00 AM**  
For All Parishioners Living & Deceased

Tuesday, April 1, 2025 **NO MASS**

Wednesday, April 2, 2025 **NO MASS**

Thursday, April 3, 2025 **NO MASS**

Friday, April 4, 2025 **11:00 AM**

#### **Fifth Sunday of Lent**

Saturday, April 5, 2025 **5:00 PM**  
+Gerald Dombroskie

Sunday, April 6, 2025 **9:00 AM**  
For All Parishioners Living & Deceased

### **HORARIOS EN ESPAÑOL**

#### **IV Domingo de Cuaresma**

Sabado 29 de marzo, 2025 **7:00 PM**  
+Julian Camacho +Luz Estella Estrada +José Correa

Domingo 30 de marzo, 2025 **11:00 AM & 1:00 PM**  
Por la Comunidad Parroquial

Martes 1 de abril, 2025 **NO HAY MISA**

Miercoles 2 de abril, 2025 **NO HAY MISA**

Jueves 3 de abril, 2025 **NO HAY MISA**

Viernes 4 de abril, 2025 **12:00 PM**

#### **V Domingo de Cuaresma**

Sabado 5 de abril, 2025 **7:00 PM**  
+Marvin Castillo Courtade

Domingo 6 de abril, 2025 **11:00 AM & 1:00 PM**  
Por la Comunidad Parroquial

**PARENTING TIP** Parents are the most influential people in their children's lives. They watch every move, take in every word and see how you navigate the world - then they become the mini version of you, their parents. All the traits they take in become part of who they are for life! Help them to be the best people they can be by looking inward and asking yourself if you are doing enough to raise them to be the adult you would like them to be. If not, change how you interact and help them grow strong in mind, body and spirit.