

# 4th Sunday Lent

## Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

*'Your brother was dead, and is alive.'*

At that time: The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.'

So he told them this parable: 'There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me." And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

'But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.' " 'And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 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." 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. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." And they began to celebrate.

'Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound." But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, "Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!" And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."'



## Reflection

The story of the Lost Son (often called the Prodigal Son) is about repentance, love, and forgiveness. It's easy to focus on the younger son, who makes bad choices, realises his mistakes, and decides to return home to say sorry. But what about the other characters?

Maybe you relate to the older brother, who feels overlooked despite doing everything right. Or maybe you see the father as the real focus—his love shows us what God's love is like. Even before his son comes home, he's looking out for him, ready to welcome him back and celebrate.

Think about which character do you relate to the most? Why do you think that is?

How does the father's love in the story remind you of God's love for us?

Let this parable inspire us to show forgiveness and love in our own lives, especially to those who feel lost or forgotten.

## Activity

Introduce the story of the Prodigal Son, but focus on the universal message of the father's unconditional love and readiness to welcome his son back. Highlight that the father's actions represent the idea of always being ready to forgive and support others, no matter what they've done.

Ask: "What does it mean to be ready to support someone, no matter what? Why is it important to have people who will accept us when we make mistakes?"

Invite the students to reflect for a moment on these questions:

- Think about a time when you made a mistake or faced a tough situation. Who was there for you, ready to support you without hesitation?
- How did it feel to have someone who was willing to give you a second chance, or to stand by you even when things weren't going well?



## Call to Action

The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) works to support people who are going through difficult times, including those in prisons who are often forgotten. This week take some time to learn more about how and why this is an important piece of work for the SVP.