

**Weekly Gospel Readings**  
**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the Holy Lent**  
**The Prodigal Son**

On this Sunday of the third week of the Great Fast, the Church reads [Luke 15:11-32](#). This passage narrates the “Parable of the Prodigal Son,” one of the most familiar and beloved of all Christ’s Parables. This week’s theme is Repentance, and this Parable is probably the most appropriate to conclude the entire third week readings of the Holy Fast.

On **Monday** of this week, the reading is a reminder to keep Christ the Lamp and His lampstand the Church in our sight so not to sin “Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness” ([Luke 11:33-35](#)). **Tuesday’s** reading warns us about being enslaved to Sin “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin” ([John 8:34](#)). **Wednesday’s** is an invitation to fight sin by worshiping the Lord “You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve” ([Luke 4:8](#)), and on **Friday** a reminder that without Jesus we are lost “Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.” ([Luke 11:23](#))

Now in today’s reading, we see the degradation of the sinner (the prodigal son) who left his father's house (the church) and abandoned his father (God), descending into humiliation, filth, and destruction. Then we see in his repentance the joy, complete forgiveness, and restoration of the relationship with his longing father. In this parable, we discover God's stance towards the sinner, considering him as His lost son. As for the stance of the Pharisees with their hearts devoid of love and filled with arrogance, is represented by the position of the elder son.

There are many messages in this Parable, but the one we should walk away with, is that God is waiting for us to take the first step toward him, as St. Ambrose explains, “But although He knows everything, God, however, awaits the expression of our confession”. However, He is continuously sending signals and knocking on our heart’s door. As soon as we take this first step in repentance, God will lovingly and joyfully accept us with open arms, “Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance” ([Luke 15:7](#)). Also, through this passage, the Church is telling us that the Holy Fast is the time when we should be pulling away from worldly desires and possessions and seek the presence and love of God in prayer, hymns, spiritual reading, and fasting. As St. John says, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him ([1 John 2:15](#)).”

As we reflect on today’s reading, let us embrace the profound truth that we are all, at various times, both the prodigal and the elder son. May we find comfort in the unconditional love of our Heavenly Father, who eagerly awaits our return with outstretched arms. And may we, in turn, extend that same love and grace to all who journey alongside us, manifesting the transformative power of God's redemptive love in our lives and in the world.

Amen.

**Sources:**

- Bible, English Standard Version
- [St. Ambrose's Commentary on Luke 15](#)
- Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament
- Commentaries on the Gospel of Luke (Arabic), Fr. Antonious Fikry
- Catena Bible