



## FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT 2025

“... His father saw him,  
and was moved with pity ...” (Lk 15:20)

‘The [Jubilee Year] theme is “**Jesus Christ our Hope**”  
for He is the aim of our pilgrimage, and He Himself is the way, the path to follow.’  
(Pope Francis)

### THE GOSPEL

The tax collectors and sinners, however, were all crowding round to listen to him, and the Pharisees and scribes complained saying, ‘This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.’ So, he told them this parable:

Then he said, ‘There was a man who had two sons...

[When the younger son returned...]

‘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. 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 will celebrate by having a feast, 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 angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out and began to urge him to come in; but he retorted to his father, “All these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed any orders of yours, 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 loose 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.”

*(Extracts from Luke 15:1-3,11-32)*

**Read and re-read the Gospel passage**, pausing for words or phrases that may ‘stand out.’

**Talk with Jesus** about what comes to mind or take some moments to rest in God’s loving presence.

## THE DESTINATION, THE WAY, THE PATH TO FOLLOW

**Two sons each choose their own way.** As if his father was already dead to him, the younger asks for his inheritance. When, after squandering it all, he returns to beg forgiveness, his father runs to embrace and clothe him with compassion, love, honour - and no words of accusation. The elder son, lost to resentment and self-pity, sees himself as an unrewarded worker. Both sons must discover that they are beloved children of a loving parent who wants nothing but to love, welcome and forgive. How does God feel about me? Can I cope with a God who loves me extravagantly, as I am, and who loves those I might judge unworthy?

## FROM FELLOW PILGRIMS – FOR REFLECTION

**Jesus brought healing**, graciousness, compassion and love, in ways never known before. He astonished, touched and frightened those who could not understand the source of such goodness. He was utterly transparent and open to God’s love acting through him. Love was dominant over fear. He spoke truth from the heart to the hearts of those ready to listen. He was moved to tears at others’ sorrow and moved to anger by exploitation of people. He challenged those who put burdens on others or who discarded the little ones. He welcomed and spoke for the children. He fed the hungry. He said that we who have plenty must share with those who have little. He left disciples to finish what he began. We are among these disciples.

*(AFES, Meet Jesus Again, 4, 4)*

**God so loved the world.** However powerful the resistance to grace might be in ourselves or others, we are never entitled to lose hope in what God can do – and has already done. *(Tony Kelly, The Creed by Heart, 157)*

**There is no need to deny** that even the best among us go to God marked by the tensions, imperfection, and unfinished business of the human condition. But to meet this judge is to encounter the ultimate love that can transform and purify.

*(Tony Kelly, The Creed by Heart, 158)*

**Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you.** As the Father has sent me, so I send you... Receive the Holy Spirit... If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them... (Jn 20:21-23) Jesus’ gift of peace and reconciliation means that the disciples once themselves forgiven, are sent forth as the agents of divine forgiveness.

*(Tony Kelly, The Creed by Heart, 144)*

**Grant me to recognise** in other people, Lord God, the radiance of your own face.

*(Teilhard de Chardin, in Maurice Ryan (Ed.) Heartlines, 80)*

**He will teach us,** for in beholding his life we find that he is the best example.

*(Saint Teresa of Avila, Carmelites Newcross)*

**In general, some of the signs** that we are loving ourselves the way Jesus does are the following: We experience a growing need for prayer. We can give a reasonable account of our strengths and weaknesses. When clouds appear on the horizon of significant relationships, we can stay put and say our piece, rather than keep quiet and run for cover. There is a growth in compassion.

*(Patrick O’Sullivan, Prayer and Relationships, 60)*

### **Find words or an image for**

- Insights gained from your reading and prayer today.
- A hope, intention or prayer for the future.

You may like to write down your thoughts or a prayer.



## A PRAYER

We turn to you, **Compassionate One**, trusting that you will restore our loving kindness when it is depleted.

**Guide us in knowing** what is required and what needs to be released. Place within us a strong hope that you are there with us whenever we choose to be with those who suffer.

**You are our strength and companion of love. Thank you** for moving our spirits toward ever deeper, fuller, and more enduring compassion. Amen.

*(Joyce Rupp, Prayers of Boundless Compassion, 88)*



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**Acknowledgements:** "Jesus Christ our Hope," Pope Francis, General Audience 18 Dec 2024; Adult Faith Education Sandhurst, Meet Jesus Again (Leaflet series) Part 4 "Encounters with Jesus; Experiencing the Reign of God", Sandhurst Diocese, 2007; Kelly, Tony CSsR, *The Creed by Heart: Re-Learning the Nicene Creed*, Blackburn, Vic: Harper Collins, 1996; Rupp, Joyce, *Prayers of Boundless Compassion*, Mulgrave Vic: Garratt Publishing, 2018; Teihard de Chardin quoted in Ryan, Maurice (Ed.), *Heartlines: Prayer Resources for a Contemporary (Revised and Updated)* Hamilton Qld: Lumino Press, 2013; St Teresa of Avila quoted at [www.carmelitesnewcross.ie](http://www.carmelitesnewcross.ie)