



Remember me in Your Kingdom

Massachusetts, February 9, 2020

Sermon: “Prodigal Son”

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The Prodigal Son represents all of us. The Father in the story represents God. God created us. Our bodies come from our parents, but our soul comes from God, and our soul is 50% or more of who we are. So, our life is a gift from God. He also gives each person talents that He expects us to develop. These talents enable us to support ourselves and our families, and they give us a useful place in society. God also gives us spiritual gifts in the Sacraments. These help us to grow closer to God, to help other people grow closer to God, and to build up the Church.

When we become obsessed with pleasures and partying, we do not develop ourselves. We waste what God has given us. A good example are the young people who go to college, and do not do well, and maybe flunk out because of too much partying. Because of seeking pleasure they do not develop their talents. The end result is they do not fully develop their talents, and they are not as useful to society as they might be.

By seeking pleasures and ignoring God our spiritual gifts are not used and developed. Such a person does not grow closer to God because they are ignoring God’s gifts and invitation. They do not help other people grow closer to God either, which especially if they are married and are parents is a very serious matter. Parents are supposed to help their children grow spiritually. If they do not, they are neglecting 50% of their job as a parent. People who ignore their spiritual life and gifts are also not helping the Church to grow. A garden is good and beautiful when each plant is healthy and growing. If many of the plants are dead or not growing, it is a bad garden. The Church can only grow if its members are growing closer to God.

If for any reason, people do not develop their talents, and they do not develop their spiritual gifts, then we can indeed say that they wasted their life. That is truly a sad thing to say. Everyone has missions to accomplish in life from God. If we do not accomplish them, then we have wasted the life that God gave us.

As Christians we are members of God’s Kingdom. Our true home is with God in His Kingdom. Even the word “parish” means a place of exiles. We are exiles in the world because

we belong to God. When we sin we are leaving God. We become estranged from the God who created us, loves us, and has special work for us to do. When we are away from God we are not at home. We are exiles in a strange country.

This is what happened to the younger son in today's Gospel. He took all that he had from his father and left, and he wasted it. He had nothing left, and it was his own fault, not his father's fault. But the younger son had enough sense to realize that he had sinned. He had enough sense to realize that he should return to his father. He had enough sense to realize that he should ask his father to forgive him.

We too should realize that when we sin we are going away from God, and we are wasting what He gave us. We should also realize that we need to return to God by being sorry for our sins. We should also realize that we can ask God for forgiveness. We do this in prayer, in Confession, and the Anointing of the Sick with olive oil.

When we are sorry for our sins, we should realize that God is like the Father in the Gospel story. He is waiting for us. He is looking for us. The Heavenly Father acted first, because He sent Jesus to find us. We have to turn to God, and move towards Him. At the same time, God has already moved towards us, and met us half-way. His arms are open, and He is ready to hug and kiss us.

When we return to God, He has a special banquet for us. That banquet is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. He is also the Paschal Lamb that feeds us. He comes to us, and gives us strength and closeness to Himself, the Father and the Holy Spirit. There is no greater or better banquet than Holy Communion. Holy Communion feeds our body and our soul to make both close to God, and to give us everlasting life.

God the Father is our Heavenly Father. He created us and loves us. He wants with all of his heart for us to be close to Him. We run away from Him when we sin. When we return to God, like the Prodigal Son in the Gospel, then God is full of joy.