

# PARABLES OF MERCY

## The Loving Father

*Luke 15 : 11 - 32*

*Isaiah 61*

*I will greatly exult in the Lord,  
My soul shall exult in my God;  
for as God has clothed me  
with the garments of salvation,  
God has covered me  
with the robe of righteousness;  
so shall your God rejoice over you!*



# Year of Mercy

Pope Francis has initiated this Year of Mercy as an opportunity for pilgrimage, reflection and commitment to action that will enable Mercy to be made concrete and practical in our own local communities.

Thank you for your willingness to enter into this time of prayer and reflection. May it be an experience of Mercy which will enable you to further respond with Mercy and compassion in your local community.

## Lectio / Visio Divina

**Lectio Divina** is a Latin term meaning “Reading with God”.

**Visio Davina** is a Latin term meaning “seeing or looking with God”.

We hope that the parable windows will be a Lectio / Visio Divina for the community of pilgrims in the Year of Mercy so that we may also “See with God”.

The practice of sacred reading has been practiced in the church for centuries, and has its origin in the monastic life as a pathway for prayer with scripture. It leads us gently into a deeper relationship with Christ as we open ourselves to him. It is the ultimate DIY spiritual project.

There are four steps in the traditional practice of Lectio Divina.  
But they do not need to be followed in this particular sequence.

**1. Lectio Visio (reading-looking)**

Look at the window slowly,  
read the scripture ...become aware of a particular  
word - phrase - colour - object or character.  
*(There is a page for your jottings inside the back cover.)*

**2. Meditatio (reflection)**

Let the significant word / object / colour / character fill  
your mind without straining to analyse them.  
You are in God's presence,  
let the Holy Spirit lead your understanding.

**3. Oratio (prayer)**

Allow your heart to speak to God,  
in words or emotions inspired by the parable  
or the thoughts that have come to you while reflecting.

**4. Contemplatio (rest)**

Let go of ideas and words and allow yourself to rest in the  
presence of God in simple wordless contemplation.

(Adapted from the  
Lectio Divina pamphlet - NZ Catholic Bishops Conference 2011)



# The Father Who Forgives - Luke 15:11-32

Give me my share of the estate  
When he came to his senses  
His father saw him and was filled with compassion  
He was lost and is found

1. Look and be open to the parable window.  
Look for a particular colour, character, object,  
concept or word that may seem significant.

2. Let that which is significant,  
fill your mind without analysing;  
you are in God's presence -  
let the Holy Spirit lead your understanding.

3. Allow your heart to speak to God  
as you are inspired by the parable.

4. How am I called to respond?  
Allow yourself to rest in the presence of God.

At each of the parable windows, there are three basic questions:

- What do I notice  
as I look at the parable window?  
Why does it move me?
- Where do I see love, or mercy or  
faithfulness, compassion or forgiveness  
in this parable?
- How am I called to respond in my life?

# A space for journaling:

*(Please jot down your thoughts and insights for further reflection)*

You may like to enter the parable window through your imagination, as a character or an object ... actually allowing yourself to experience the Mercy and Love of God.

Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

“Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself

out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate. “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ ‘Son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’

