



Homily for
FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
5/6 March, 2016

Deacon Jim's homily follows....

READING 2 (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

We are being reconciled with God.

In Jesus we are a new creation.

We have a new life...we are living a new life.

GOSPEL (Luke 15:1-3, 11-32)

Here is an Iowa farm family twist to the parable of the Prodigal Son.

“I’m not going to be a farmer all my life. If you think I am going to be a farmer

you have another think coming.

If you think I am going to spend my life scattering corn in a barnyard for some silly chickens to peck for in the dirt and dust you are crazy. I am cut out for much bigger and better things.

I am not going to be a farmer all my life. Give me my share of the inheritance and I am out of here.”

His father gave him his share of the inheritance and the son left.

Wasting his inheritance on “wine, women, and song” he found himself destitute.

He came to his senses...returned to his father...and was received back by a father filled with great joy at the return of his son.

Where are we...or...might we be in this story?

-are we living in rebellion?

-have we come to our senses?

-are we making our way back?

I have several stories of the experience of forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation that I have witnessed. I need to choose just one.

-I am at a retreat.

-I am third in line for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

-the man in front of me says to me, “Why don’t you go in front of me.”

-I respond to him, “No, that’s ok, stay where you are at.”

-the man with father at the time comes out and now there is just the two of us.

-“I think you need to go in front of me” the man says to me.

-“No, that ok, stay where you are at” is my reply.”

-“No you don’t understand” he says, “I haven’t been to confession in 38 years I’m going to be in there for a long time.”

-“Stay where you are at...you are in for a big surprise” I responded.

-the man with father come out and the man I have been talking to goes in.

-a short time later he come out with tears streaming down his face.

-he come to me...throw his arms around me crying, “Thank you...Thank you.”

-he is literally squeezing me so tight I can't breath and I think,

“if he doesn't let up soon I am going to die.”

I was privileged to witness a man who was living in rebellion...

who had come to his senses...and was making his way back.

Living in sin...is living in rebellion...

is living in the prison of sin....living in captivity.

READING 1 (Joshua 5:9a, 1012)

The Israelites are celebrating their being set free from captivity.

We celebrate our being set free from captivity by...

celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation...

and most importantly by celebrating the Mass...

and receiving Jesus in the Eucharist from this table.

BUT...if we are set free from something we are set free for something.

READING 2

We are set free to be a new creation...

and to live a new life...

as **ambassadors** for Christ...

allowing Jesus to use our words...our actions...our very lives...

to touch the lives of others...

allowing Him to build His kingdom on earth.

Are we learning the lessons from the parable of the Prodigal Son

-living in rebellion...coming to our senses...making our way back?

Are we living as ambassadors for Christ?