

March 6, 2016

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Readings: JOSHUA 5:9-12
LUKE 15:1-3, 11B-32

A Prodigal Son, An Undignified Dad



You can tell what an interpreter thinks a parable means by the name she gives it. So what about this one? The Prodigal Son? The Lost Sons? The Waiting Father? The Enabling Father? The Undignified Dad?

This parable, the best loved of Luke's parables, falls into two parts: the first focuses on the younger son, the second on the older son. The father is the protagonist throughout the parable. The younger son asks for his share of the inheritance, probably a third of his father's estate as the younger of two sons. The essence of a man's inheritance in that time was land and the only way it could be received was upon the father's death. Thus, his request was essentially, "Father, I wish you would drop dead." Even though the father could divide the land before his death, he retained rights to the use of the land. The younger son, in selling his portion, left his father without rights to the land's use (Stiller, 111). A person's property is his until death, and the family's property was meant to maintain its oldest members until their death. So to demand his share early and then to dissipate it rather than to manage it responsibly for his parents' sakes, is to say to his father, in effect, "You are already dead to me" (Duke, 90).

He goes into the Greco-Roman world, as many Jews did to seek their fortunes in the lands around Palestine. His goal is to find himself, but he ends up by losing himself, reduced to working with unclean animals. The parable tells us that he "came to himself." At this point, the parable's emotional richness begins to draw us in, so that we identify first with one then another of its characters. The boy is hungry. He is humiliated. He knows he has made a mistake and is desperate to survive. Does this mean he genuinely repented? We can't be sure. The narrative shows him sitting among the pig pods rehearsing what he will say to his father. Can we trust his sincerity? Is he just saying whatever it takes to fill his stomach? The story doesn't fill in this gap for us.

The culture of Palestinian villages was one of honor and shame. Honor was connected to how one was perceived in the community. The son has brought shame on his father and his whole family by his behavior. He can expect to be shamed by the village. His decision has affected the whole village. It has put his family's future means of making a living at risk. It has undermined their honor and place in the village and soured their relationship with their neighbors (Stiller, 112).

The younger son could expect that the townspeople would conduct a *gesasah* ceremony on his return. This is not a reception in the fellowship hall with a "Welcome Home" banner and a sheet cake. This is a ceremony for a son of the village who had lost his money to Gentiles or married an immoral woman. They would gather around him, breaking jars with corn and nuts and declare that he was to be cut off from the village. His entry into the village would be humiliating as his townspeople expressed their anger and resentment toward his actions (Stiller, 111).

When the father sees his son, his compassion is inspired and he moves toward him. We are reminded of the sequence in the Good Samaritan of seeing someone suffering, having compassion, and taking action. He may have been seeking to protect his son from the insults of those he must pass by on the way home. His behavior is strange. Fathers did not run to their children. This is more maternal behavior, as is the kiss. Here the father exposes himself to humiliation to prevent his son from being humiliated. His behavior is strange; it is not the way the male head of a household would act in Jesus' time. He is the patriarchal head of the household. His running to meet his son is an expression of a love so strong that one is willing to cast one's dignity to the winds, to put aside one's power and position for the good of another (Stiller, 110).

I'm a parent of three children. I know what it feels like to be angry and hurt by a child and desperate to lay eyes on that child all at the same time, knowing that, if you ever do, you will give them the moon, never mind that they don't deserve it and that it may not be good for their character. As a parent, whatever struggle you are having with your child's growing pains, you cannot bear to hear a negative word about that child uttered by someone else! So I'm there with that father, running out to place himself, physically, if necessary, in between that boy and any insults that bystanders may fling at him as he makes his way home.

The father won't even let his son get through his carefully rehearsed speech before he begins issuing orders to the servants. He offers him a kiss (a sign of forgiveness, a robe (a mark of distinction), a signet ring (a sign of authority), and shoes (worn only by freemen). The father throws him a banquet, rejoicing in his son's return to his father's table. He wants to point out his honored status to his younger son, but also to the community...

Continue Reading

<http://www.patheos.com/Progressive-Christian/Prodigal-Son-Alyce-McKenzie-03-04-2013?offset=1&max=1>

This Week at Inca



[Click here to learn more about Lent Event](#)

The season of Lent is now upon us. As we travel through this season, Incarnation will be participating in something that is referred to as **the Lent Event**. This is a season that we are invited to **Reflect, Connect, and Act**- our theme for the Lenten Season.

As such our Lent Event is 40 days to help us explore ways to:

- live more simply,
- reflect on our faith
- and support people struggling to free themselves from poverty and injustice.

Similarly, we are invited to participate in an expression of God's mercy and grace by giving up something we can do without. To accompany us on the journey, Lent Event offers a new **GUIDE TO LIVING LENT** plus a full range of resources to provide spiritual enrichment. These include a bible study, written daily prayers, worship resources for Sunday services and children's activities. All are available free on www.lentevent.com where you can also subscribe to the Lent Event Daily Prayers. You can also get the prayers delivered each day to your phone by downloading the Lent Event app.



Welcome!

Syrian Refugee Family

If you would like to make donations to this family, that would be greatly appreciated. Gently used household items, clothing and children's things (toys, books, stroller, car seats) will be collected each Sunday. We do not know sizes at this time. Please donate clothing in a size that is your best guess. Any donations in excess of what our family needs will be donated to another charity in our community.

If you have furniture to donate, please contact Mary Loeffler (905) 825-0982. She can pick up in her minivan and will be storing all furniture in her basement until we need it. **See attachment to this email for list of needed items.**

These items will be collected each Sunday by the following people:

- Household items - Lesley Hickey
- Clothing - Jean Grieve and Judy Vanderwater
- Toys, books, car seats (forward facing and booster type) - Lynne Jenkins

Also attached to the email is a list of pantry items for our sponsored family: Let's all get together to fill the kitchen and pantry for our family. If you would like to help, choose an item(s) from your birth month. Most of the items can be found at your local store, but the ones marked with an asterisk may be found at a Middle Eastern grocery store such as Adonis, 1240 Eglinton Ave W, Mississauga.

Our family will have many adjustments to make to life in Canada. It is important that they have some of the comforts of home, including familiar food, during this time. It's fine if there are multiples of staples, like rice and beans. You can bring your donations to church, or arrange to deliver them to Leslie Hickey.



Choir Practice –

The choir rehearses every Wednesday **at 7:30**. Share your voice, all welcome. Rehearsals for Easter begin this week, 7:30-8:30 PM.



Worship Committee - Sunday March 6

We'll be meeting in Michael's office after the 10:00 service.



Easter Flowers:

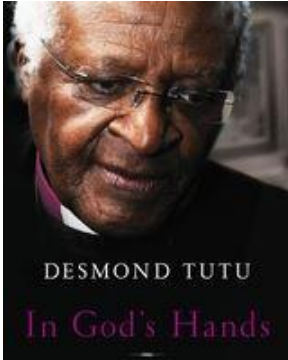
Donation envelopes are now available at the greeter's table. Please make sure to fill out the front of the envelope and hand it to one of the counters.



Wing and a Prayer – Thursday, March 24, 2016!

We meet at 6:30pm at Monaghan's. Cost: \$25 per person including food and drink. RSVP Rob Moniuk (Robert@Moniuk.ca).

Everyone is welcome!



In God's Hands by Desmond Tutu – book study

Tuesdays, 11-12:30, for 6 weeks ending March 22

Archbishop Tutu has produced a meditation on the infinite love of God and the infinite value of the human individual. Not only are we in God's hands, he says, our names are engraved on his palms. Led by Karen Pitt and Michael.



Contemplative Fire – Sunday, March 20, 8:00pm.

Are you looking for time to reflect, meditate and recharge your spiritual life? Each meeting begins with a communal sharing of food followed by quiet and intentional reflection in the gathering area. The response to this has been very encouraging. We continue to see new faces at each meeting and look forward to growing this community.

For more information, please speak to Michael. All are welcome.



Go for the Gold – Fundraising event for Incarnation

Gather up your broken and unwanted gold items, coins, paper money, donate them to the church by putting them in the envelopes provided, and receive a tax receipt for the value once the items have been sold. Doug Froom will be at church on Sunday to discuss how the program works.

For larger or more valuable items, please bring them to the worship area on one of these appraisal dates:

Thursday, March 10, 2-4pm, and Saturday, March 19 3-5pm



Niagara Youth Conference – August 8 to September 2, 2016

A caring, spiritual, participatory learning community that encourages inclusivity and personal growth - mitigated, of course, by fun and frivolity! This is a residential conference for youth ages 13-21. Early bird registration is now open. Details can be [found here](#)



Youth Group Events-

For info contact Phil Carver at incayouthprogram@gmail.com

Community News



The Choir of St. Jude's Church

Palm Sunday, March 20, 4:00pm, St. Jude's Church

"Olivet to Calvary", A Victorian Sacred Cantata recalling the scenes which mark the last days of the Saviour's life on earth

Puttin' on the Ritz, The Talisker Players Quartet

Friday, April 8, 2016 8:00pm, St. Jude's Church

Featuring music from the Irving Berlin Songbook including: Top Hat, Cheek to Cheek, Heat Wave, Always, and Puttin' on the Ritz. Form more information call 905-844-3972. Tickets \$30



Halton Green Screens at FILM.CA cinemas

7pm, second Thursday of the month

Mar 10 – *Bottled Life* - the truth about Nestle's business with water

This & That



Looking to volunteer?

We have lots of ways you can get involved. Positions include: altar prep, greeters, readers, hosts and coffee preparation.

Youth can gain some volunteer high school hours. Training will be provided. Contact Claudine Boulert, at boulert@rogers.com for more information, or call 905-825-2851.



Changes to Order of Service or Bulletin News - Any changes need to be sent to the office by Tuesday, noon. office@incarnationchurch.ca

Nametags let people know who you are and make it helpful for people to put names to faces, especially for newcomers

NEW ENVELOPES – we're implementing a new weekly donation envelope system. Those currently using envelopes will be contacted in the next few weeks about making the switch. If you're ready for a new set, contact Margot at office@incarnationchurch.ca. Have you considered pre-authorized payments? A safe convenient way to ensure the church has consistent funding. See office for more details if you'd like to sign up



Receiving Communion

All people at Incarnation are invited to receive the bread and wine at communion. The bread is received from the priest who stands between the servers who offer wine from the common cup; choose whatever side is free. You may choose to receive from an individual wine cups available to the left of the altar. Take one, consume the wine and replace the empty cup in the same spot. We hope this provides an inclusive approach to communion whereALL are welcome.

VOLUNTEER!	March 6	March 13
Bread Making	J. Lockhart	P. Henley
Altar Prep	W. MacDougall	B. H-M & L. Bird
Coffee	U. Andensamer	Gowing
Coffee	Bowden	Hickey
Host	S. Hutchinson	B. Adams
Reader 1	M. Russell	D. Bold
Gospel	J. Lockhart	G. Hughes
Prayers	V. Klath	K. Pitt
Server 1	D. Bold	A. MacNaughton
Server 2	L. Hickey	K. Pitt
Wine Cups	E. Lorimer	P. Carver
Counting	J. Lockhart	P. Moffat