

Reconciliation - God Forgives Us

As we think about the depths of God's forgiveness, we can reflect on the parable of the prodigal son. This is the story about a loving father with two sons. At one point the younger son asks for his portion of the family money, leaves and carelessly spends all his money, ending up destitute. He realizes his selfishness, and returns home to beg his father for forgiveness. Instead of being angry, the father welcomes him with open arms, forgives him and throws a lavish celebration to welcome him home.

In this story, at some point, the younger son began to question his decisions. He thought about the choices he had made and realized many of them had been selfish. We also should think about the decisions we make and consider whether or not our choices are good ones – do they show love for God, ourselves and others?

Just as the father in the parable forgave his son, God forgives us. This story is a wonderful illustration of how much God our Father loves us and how good it feels when we experience His loving forgiveness.



THE PRODIGAL SON WORD SEARCH

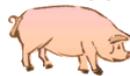


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ANGER
FATHER
MONEY
SERVANTS
SON

BROTHER
FORGIVENESS
PIGS
SIN
STARVING



CELEBRATION
GRACE
PRODIGAL
REPENTANCE



As we prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we should spend some special time with God just thinking about our choices. We should make an examination of conscience. Tell God that we are sorry for the times we deliberately did not do our best or deliberately made poor choices. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us make good choices so we can keep the Ten Commandments and live the Greatest Commandment with the commitment that God deserves.

Here are some good questions to consider:

- *How have our actions upheld the Ten Commandments?*
- *Did we show respect for God by taking time to pray and respecting His name?*
- *Did we thank God for all the gifts He has given us?*
- *Have we disobeyed those who care for us?*
- *Are there times we could have done good for others but did not?*

Our prayer this week is called the Act of Sorrow. Although you will not need to recite it from memory during the Sacrament of Reconciliation, it is a wonderful prayer that should be prayed often, especially after doing penance.

O my God, I am heartily
sorry for having offended
Thee, and I detest all my
sins because of Thy just
punishments; but most of all
because they offend Thee,
my God, Who are all good
and deserving of all my
love. I firmly resolve, with
the help of Thy grace,
to sin no more and to avoid
the near occasions of sin.

AMEN