

**"Seeing myself small, I am in my center, because I see what God does in me and in my things: That's what I want. A universal heart available for everything, for everyone, always."
(Saint Raphaela Mary)**



GOSPEL: THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SON (Luke 15: 1-3.11-32)

The fullness of joy is what the Church proposes to us this fourth Sunday of Lent, so that we can experience with God's forgiveness the anticipated gift of the Passover that we will soon celebrate: that in the Risen Christ we are new creatures. We have the parable of the Prodigal Son. The Father, the actual protagonist, reflects the image of the God of love that Jesus reveals to us: respect, generosity, patience, hope, tenderness, overflowing joy, infinite capacity for forgiveness. For the Father, both those who "comply" and the "wayward" who walk away and squander, sit at his table and participate in his feast, because they are his children. His mercy impels him to demonstrate his immense love by manifesting his deepest truth in gestures and attitudes of welcome, forgiveness and rehabilitation of the estranged son, which culminates with the great celebration full of joy. God loves without conditions, his forgiveness is a total rehabilitation, He returns dignity to persons.

Following this parable, Pope Francis proposes the verb "Misericordear". It means turning the heart towards those in a situation of misery and giving them adequate, timely and concrete help. It is the love that carries with it the appreciation and recognition of the others, regardless of their origin and their social, ethnic, cultural or religious identity. Mercy is, above all, an extravagance of gratuitous, overflowing love. Mercy becomes especially present in weakness and suffering in the form of salvation, liberation and forgiveness. Mercy sets in motion all the spiritual mechanisms of love to deliver from their situation those who are mired in misery. The God of Jesus, like the father of the parable, is pure mercy with regard to human beings.

LET US PRAY WITH THE GOSPEL

- *All publicans and sinners used to come to Jesus to listen to him.* Am I one of those people in need who come to Jesus to listen to him? With what attitude do I approach in order to listen to him?
- *... the younger son, gathering all his belongings, left for a distant country, and there wasted his fortune by living in misery.* In what situations have I broken with the Father? Do I recognize the gifts that God has given me? Have I ever squandered those gifts by keeping them for myself, not putting them at the service of others or misusing them?
- *... and he began to experience need.* What are my greatest needs? When I seek God, what do I put before Him? What are my "unhealed" wounds that I have to present to the Lord?
- *... his father saw him and his heart was moved; and, running, he embraced him and covered him with kisses.* How do I experience the love and mercy of the Father? Do I let myself be embraced, forgiven by Him? Do I have deep experience of his closeness? How do I have to be "Mercy" for others? Who are the people and situations that await our "going forth" today? How would we translate "running", "embracing", "kissing" ... into current gestures?
- *And they began to celebrate the banquet.* Is my experience of meeting the Lord an authentic celebration? Do I live it with joy? Do I celebrate the Eucharistic banquet with intensity and joy? What steps do I have to continue taking to live it with greater depth and joy?
- *Son, you are always with me, and everything that is mine is yours; but it was necessary to celebrate a banquet and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has been revived...* Am I conscious, at all times, of the presence of God in my life? What are the great reasons I have to rejoice? What things do I discover God is doing in me? What experience do I have of making mine the joys, the fatigue, the hopes and desperation of others? Am I happy about the good of others, about "my brothers"? How to grow in this dimension?