

«Behold, I make all things new »

(Revelation 21 :5)

Lent Retreat 2022

I AM REPENTANT

Luke 15:11-32

We read again and maybe for the thousand time the biblical passage of the prodigal son. We shall delve into this passage as if it was the first time we see it; and God shall talk to us about things that will affect us personally this time more than ever. Let our readings compare to our behaviors that are like that of the prodigal son and the elder son, or let these readings compare once to the former and once to the latter. And let our hearts be guided towards repentance because God is indeed waiting for us as a Dad and as a Mom no matter how big our sin is and no matter how long we have been away from Him.

The passage begins by highlighting the prodigal son and it mainly elucidates his journey entitled neglecting the parental love. He preferred and followed all earthly pleasures from gourmandize to adultery and spending money. His original sin was his wish to be irresponsibly independent and this is why he was called the prodigal son. This nickname stuck to him even after he realized his mistake so that he becomes an example to everyone who wants to live alone without others.

Have we ever thought about the feelings of this prodigal son? How they fluctuated upward between a feeling of ecstasy due to freedom, self- confidence and self-sufficiency and then downward toward poverty, humiliation, hunger and a fear of death. Between these two levels, he returned to himself and discovered fatherhood in the depth of his being and this is when he felt homesick for his father's home.

The freedom this son so asked for, was misused. The money was also spent wrongfully. He tried to fulfill himself with all the human means that were available, but he lost the most important thing: he lost the loving home and on top of that a merciful dad who used to forgive him so he can build him, and when he fell, he repented

The power of mercy in this passage prevails over all the other emotions the prodigal son was having. He thus puts all the things that had happened to him in one hand and the mercy of his dad in the other- eventually, this latter wins. Mercy was the best companion to the son ever since he decided to leave his dad. Mercy is a right just as heritage is a right, and dads and moms cannot deprive their kids of mercy or heritage. The strength of this passage is proving that mercy is the true heritage; it stayed and wealth vanished. The human being makes wealth but wealth can destroy the human being.

The prodigal son did a mistake by creating new social relationships. He lost track of what is more important, and thus he returned to his starting point to start over again.

Following the long lines about the prodigal son, the text ends with two words about the eldest son. He is an example of the ones who hold onto the religious laws without mercy as he couldn't disregard what the religious texts say. He couldn't understand fatherhood so he remained at the level of the arid brotherhood. If we don't become fathers, we will remain brothers. A healthy brotherhood can turn into a healthy fatherhood; otherwise, this brotherhood will stop evolving and become hostile.

If the prodigal son has split from his father, the eldest son has split from the entirety of fatherhood. The youngest sibling returned because fatherhood brought him back; however, the eldest son split and may never return. In this case, his situation is more difficult than the younger one.

By meditating this passage and delving into the three characters in it, which persona do I choose to adopt as the course of my life? Let's contemplate the truth behind each of the roles: the dad, the prodigal son and the eldest son.

The characters of this passage are but stances we can adopt; and we had better adopt a daring journey towards fatherhood. How many times have our fathers and mothers forgiven us until we became who are now? How many times do we accept our kids' wrong behaviors to mend them? It is not surprising then how Jesus Christ calls The Lord the Heavenly Father? He couldn't find a higher institution than fatherhood and motherhood that reflect love, forgiveness and positivity. There is no other means than love to build the self and the other.

In this spiritual retreat, we examine our negative feelings towards the others and we try to leave them (without returning to them) because they prevent our spiritual and humanitarian growth. A little bit of negativity in our positions can ruin our peace. Let's put this dark side of our personality before Jesus and give him our full trust and belief that He can change us because He is a true Father.