

HOLY MASS

**4TH SUNDAY OF
LENT (YEAR C)
(LAETARE SUNDAY)**

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READINGS

1st Reading: JOSH. 5: 9a, 10-12

Resp. Psalm. 34:2-3,4-5,6-7

2nd Reading: 2 Corr. 5:17-21

Gosp. Accl.: LK. 15:18

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3,11-32



HOMILY TOPIC

**THE JOY OF
RETURNING
HOME**

INTRODUCTION

Having been invited by the Lord to embrace repentance and the ticking clock of grace last Sunday, we are today invited to reflect on the joys of returning to the merciful father.

INTRODUCTION

**we also celebrate today the
'Laetare' Sunday in which we
already joyfully celebrate the
assurances of God's pardon
and reconciliation which the
prodigal child story already
portrays.**

INTRODUCTION

The joy of today's laetare Sunday is therefore the joy of repentance, the joy of Divine reconciliation, the joy of salvation, the joy of eventual inheritance of our promised home, the joy of the Lord's goodness and the joy of motherhood (as in today's mothering Sunday).

1ST READING

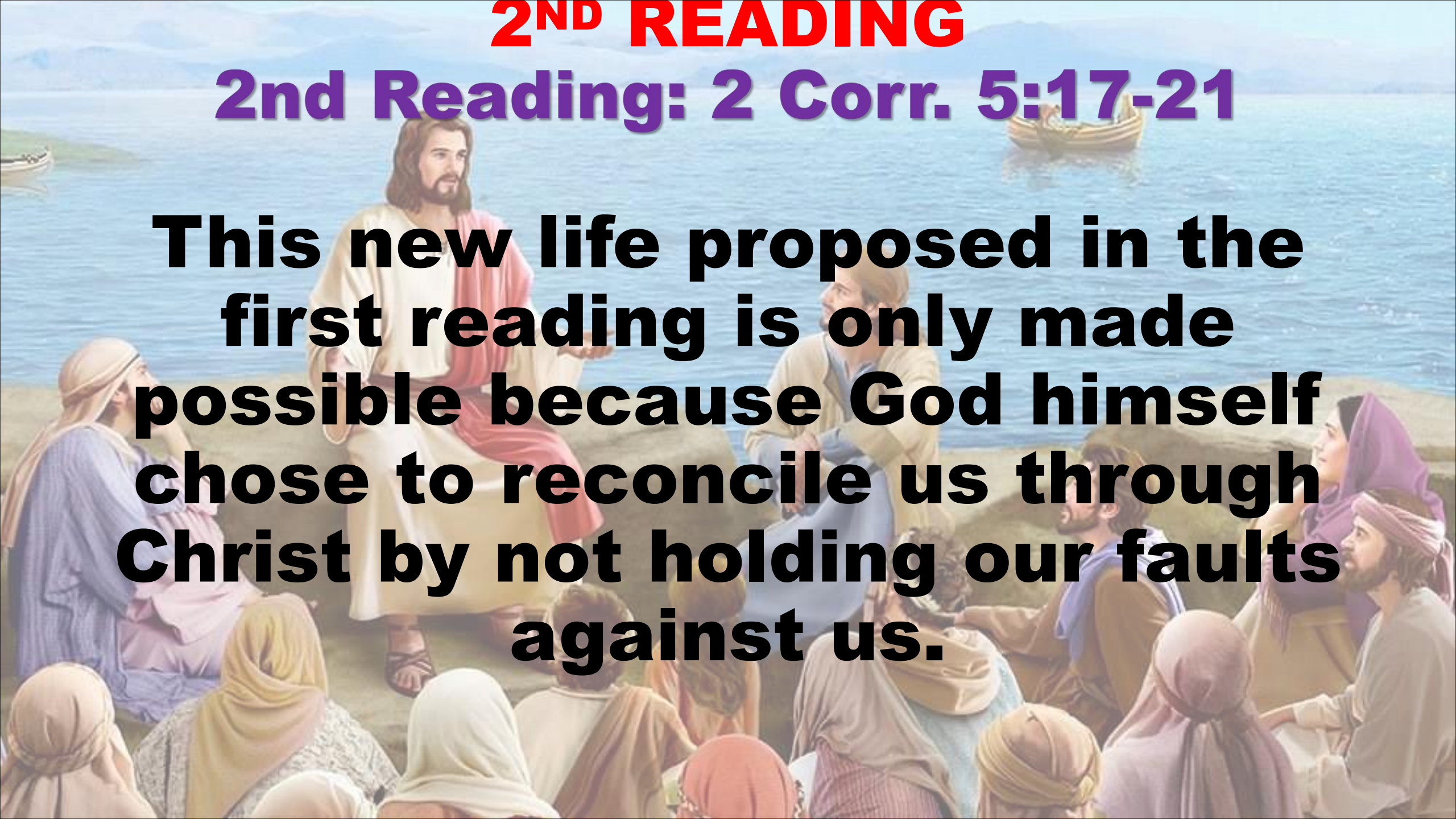
JOSH. 5: 9a, 10-12

In this reading, God confirms his deliverance of his people “I have taken the shame of Egypt away from you, the shame of sin and darkness are behind them.” The years of wandering in the desert are over, they have **come home to the promised land. It’s a new life.**

2ND READING

2nd Reading: 2 Corr. 5:17-21

This new life proposed in the first reading is only made possible because God himself chose to reconcile us through Christ by not holding our faults against us.

A religious painting depicting Jesus, with long brown hair and a beard, wearing a white robe with a red sash, standing on a rocky shore and addressing a group of people. The group consists of men and women in traditional Middle Eastern attire, including head coverings and robes in various colors like purple, yellow, and brown. They are gathered on the shore, looking towards Jesus. In the background, there is a calm blue sea with a small boat visible in the distance under a hazy sky.

2ND READING

2nd Reading: 2 Corr. 5:17-21

This is Joy coming. Bro. Paul says that the death of Christ is making us new ambassadors if we key into the opportunity of Easter call. The task of the church is to bring the benefits won by Christ to all people.

GOSPEL READING

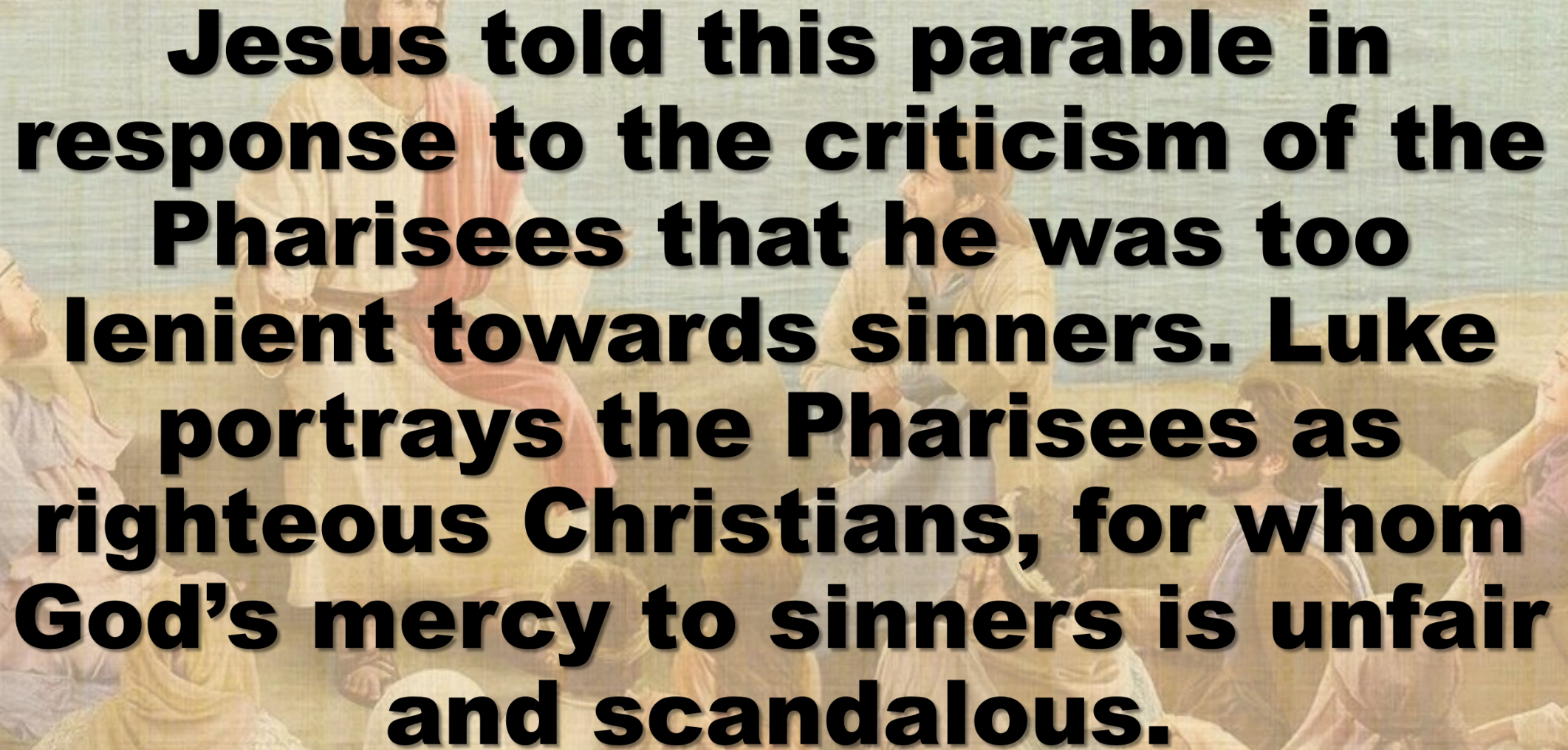
Luke 15:1-3,11-32

In the gospel, Jesus gives a parable I describe as ‘the story of prodigals’. It talks about the home-coming of the prodigal son and how his wandering years in the desert of sin came to an end by the mercy and love of the prodigal father. Surprised? Yes! Prodigal father.

GOSPEL READING

Luke 15:1-3,11-32

Jesus told this parable in response to the criticism of the Pharisees that he was too lenient towards sinners. Luke portrays the Pharisees as righteous Christians, for whom God's mercy to sinners is unfair and scandalous.



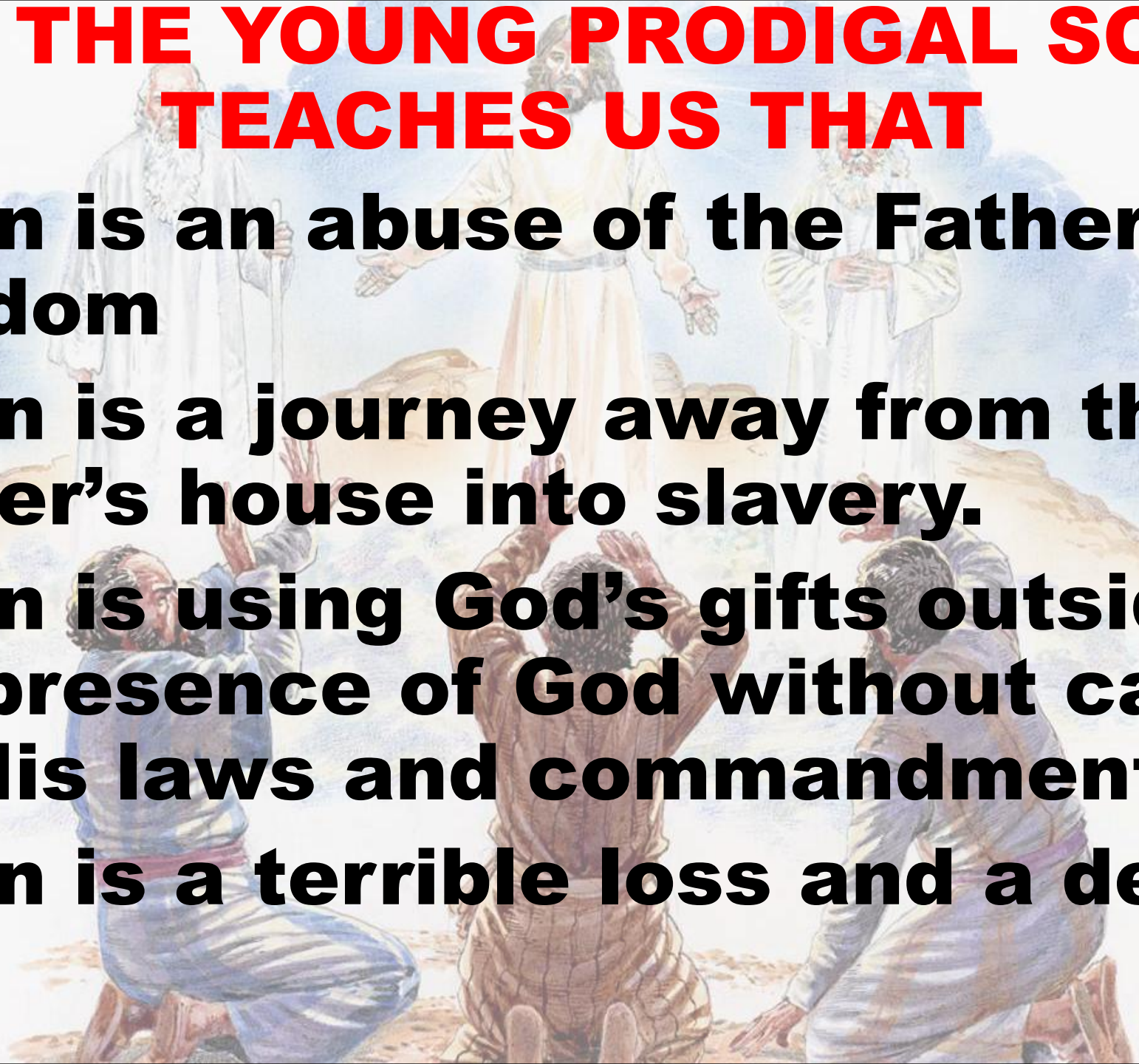
LESSONS FROM THE READINGS



We are therefore going to reflect on the lessons we could take home from the prodigals of today's readings. The 4 prodigal personalities that have great lessons for us today are the prodigal child, the father, the elder son and our mothers.

1. THE YOUNG PRODIGAL SON TEACHES US THAT

- **1. Sin is an abuse of the Father's freedom**
- **2. Sin is a journey away from the Father's house into slavery.**
- **3. Sin is using God's gifts outside the presence of God without care for His laws and commandments.**
- **4. Sin is a terrible loss and a death**



1. THE YOUNG PRODIGAL SON TEACHES US THAT

• **REPENTANCE:** is a journey towards the father's house which must involve 10 R's

• **1. Realisation 2. Recognition of what I have done 3. Remorse 4. Resolution 5. Restitution 6. Returning 7. Reconciliation/confession/Renunciation of sin 8. Restoration/Re-einstatement 9. Redemption 10. Rejoicing Laetare Sunday/ even by angels in heaven**

2. THE PRODIGAL FATHER TEACHES US THAT

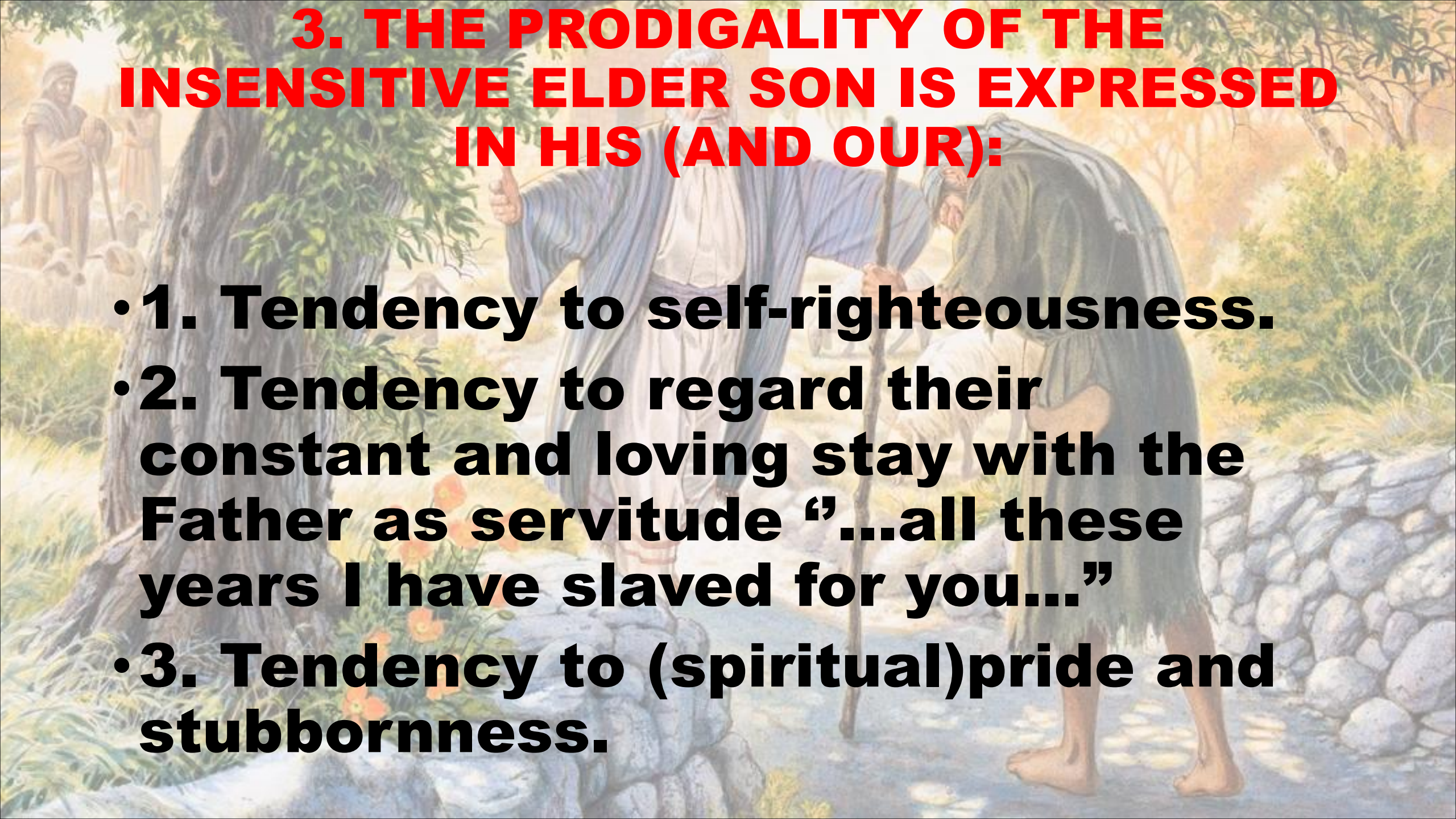
- **God manifests His loving mercies and forgiveness such that:**
 - **1. He allows us in freedom and love to make choices.**
 - **2. He waits eagerly for us to return.**
 - **3. He complements our little human efforts with His Divine grace by completing the journey for us.**

2. THE PRODIGAL FATHER TEACHES US THAT

- **God manifests His loving mercies and forgiveness such that:**
- **4. He looks upon us in pity, completely forgives and forgets our offences, restoring us to our princely state when we come home, however bad and disfigured we have become.**
- **5. He extends his loving invitation to come home to all both those inside and those outside (the first and the second son).**

3. THE PRODIGALITY OF THE INSENSITIVE ELDER SON IS EXPRESSED IN HIS (AND OUR):

- **1. Tendency to self-righteousness.**
- **2. Tendency to regard their constant and loving stay with the Father as servitude “...all these years I have slaved for you...”**
- **3. Tendency to (spiritual)pride and stubbornness.**



THE PRODIGALITY IN MOTHERHOOD

**Today, being the Mothering Sunday,
we are not just to celebrating
motherhood, but honoring the
extraordinary women who have
nurtured us, guided us, and loved us
unconditionally especially our
biological mothers.**

THE PRODIGALITY IN MOTHERHOOD

To all our mothers in the parish. We your children celebrate your enduring legacy of love and sacrifice, and acknowledge the profound impact you have had on our journeys.

- Your lives are testaments to the power of a mother's heart.**
- Your motherly lives have profound impacts on all of us.**
- Like loving God, your wish and joy is to see us return as soon as we stray**
- You are the most amazing mothers we could ever ask for.**
- Your strength, kindness, and unwavering love inspire us every day**

The background of the image is a composite. On the left, there is a portion of the Nigerian coat of arms, which includes a shield with a ship, a sun, and a banner at the bottom that reads "FEDERATION OF WOMEN ORGANISATION NIGERIA". On the right, there is a woman wearing a traditional blue and white Nigerian dress (buba and headwrap).

**TO ALL OUR
MOTHERS**

**THANK YOU FOR
ALL YOU DO FOR US**

THE JUBILEE PRAYER

Father in heaven, may the *faith* you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of *charity* enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed *hope* for the coming of your Kingdom. May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.

THE JUBILEE PRAYER

**May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally. May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer through out the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory
a n d p r a i s e f o r e v e r .**

Amen.



OUR WEBSITE

**[www.immaculateconception
catholicchurch.com.ng](http://www.immaculateconceptioncatholicchurch.com.ng)**

PRAYER FOR THE SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL GROWTH OF OUR PARISH

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of creation. From age to age you raise people for yourself. We thank you for the growth and achievements that we have attained so far as a family of Immaculate Conception Catholic parish. United in Jesus Christ, you form us as a parish with the mission of nurturing disciples through faith and human development, hospitality, prayer, and service. Groom us until we become equipped disciples empowered to serve.

We pray for our pastoral team, the parish priest, the pastoral council, and all leaders of organizations and societies. In their decisions and choices, grant them the wisdom to always understand your divine plan for us as a people. May they always be guided by the Holy Spirit as you build us up for your glory.

PRAYER FOR THE SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL GROWTH OF OUR PARISH

Lord Jesus, we commit our present and future projects to you. We beg you, to provide the resources we need to build a befitting place of worship for you. Please bless us and give us a generous heart moved by faith and trust.

Dearest Mary immaculate, please intercede for us before your son Jesus Christ, that our journey as a Christian people might win us eternity. Amen

Mary immaculate, mediatrix of all graces

pray for us

ASSIGNMENTS

BIBLE STUDY FOR LENT

- **Week 1 Study Mark 14:1–25.**
- **Week 2 Study Mark 14:26–50.**
- **Week 3 Study Mark 14:51–72.**
- **Week 4 Study Mark 15:1–21.**
- **Week 5 Study Mark 15:22–47.**
- **Week 6 Study Mark 16:1–20.**