

A JUBILEE RESOURCE FOR THE WEEKS OF LENT 2016



CALLED TO BE a people of

# HOPE



*"The season of Lent during this Jubilee Year should also be lived more intensely as a privileged moment to celebrate and experience God's mercy. How many pages of Sacred Scripture are appropriate for meditation during the weeks of Lent to help us rediscover the merciful face of the Father!"* MV 17



# MERCIFUL

# like the Father

WEEK THREE  
*The Prodigal Son*

 JUBILEE  
of MERCY  
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## WEEK THREE THE PRODIGAL SON

*'He was dead and has come back to life;  
he was lost and is found.'*

### OPENING PRAYER

God of compassion,  
you await the sinner's return  
and spread a feast to welcome home the lost.

Save us from the temptations that lead us away from you,  
and draw us back by the constancy of your love,  
that we may take our place in your household  
and gladly share our inheritance with others.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

### WORD OF GOD

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

'A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, "Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me." So the father divided the property between them. A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery.

'When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the local inhabitants who put him on his farm to feed the pigs. And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. Then he came to his senses and said, "How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger! I will leave this place and go to my father and say: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants." So he left the place and went back to his father.

'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him

tenderly. Then his son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son." But the father said to his servants "Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found." And they began to celebrate.

'Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about. "Your brother has come" replied the servant "and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back safe and sound." He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him; but he answered his father, "Look, all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me so much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends. But, for this son of yours, when he comes back after swallowing up your property - he and his women - you kill the calf we had been fattening."

'The father said, "My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours. But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found." '

## REFLECTION

*Fr Henry Wansbrough OSB*

*The reflection from Fr Henry is available to download from [cliftondiocese.com](http://cliftondiocese.com).  
Play the video clip [here](#).*

## QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

Fr Henry suggests that this parable might also be called the parable of the *helpless father*. In what sense is this true?

Who is the son that has our sympathy?

Do either of the sons act with undivided motives?

Are there ways in our keeping of Lent which will enable us to encounter the Lord's mercy more deeply so that we can put love in front of everything?

If we are to be 'merciful like the Father' who are the younger sons we need to *welcome back with open arms*, and who are the older sons we need to *go out in search of*?

*Re-read the Scripture passage for this session. You may like to follow the reading with a time of prayer and intercession after which you might pray the OUR FATHER.*

## FINAL PRAYER

Loving Father,  
you are a God of mercy and compassion.

We thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, into our world to show and teach us how to love.

When we walk through the Door of Mercy during this Holy Year, may we open our hearts to you so that we may reflect your love, mercy and compassion in our families, communities and parishes.

May we walk with Jesus through the 'streets of Galilee', comforting the sick, opening our arms to the 'little ones', sharing with the poor and searching out the marginalised in our society.

May it be a year when barriers between us fall and reconciliation becomes possible:  
a year when our faith in your mercy is strengthened and we learn how to be your face of mercy in our world.

Amen.