

Isn't that the story of you? Isn't that the story of me? Isn't that the story of every one of us? How many times have we left the "bread" of our father's house for the "husks of swine?" And how many times have we come back and received the same welcome as this young man? 70 x 7 times?

But the parable does not end with the return of the prodigal son. Just as the party is "getting a glow on", the elder son returns from a long, hard day in the fields. As he approaches the house, he hears the music and the laughter. He calls one of the servants and asks, "What's going on here?" The servant tells him that his brother has returned and his father is so happy to have him back that he has killed the fatted calf, called in the neighbours and they are celebrating.

The elder son is angry. He refuses to go into the house. The father has to come out. When he does the son demands an explanation. "All of these years I have worked for you..."

Isn't the sin of the elder son far greater than all the sins of the prodigal son? He couldn't forgive his own brother. He couldn't rejoice with his father who was so happy to have his son back. We can all identify also with this elder son. How many times have we been jealous, envious, and angry because God gave someone else what we thought was due to us?

But the parable is not about either one of these sons. It is about the father. It is more about the father's unconditional love than the sins of his sons. It is about our heavenly Father who loves us unconditionally with a love we can never earn or be worthy of. Who loves us not because of what we are but because of Who He is. It is all about the fidelity of the love of God. It is all about the divine mercy. (Source: 'Seasoned Spirituality' - Fr. Ronald Kissinger S.J.)

Fr. Michael Carey

Mass intentions for Next Week

Mon 8.00am Robert Donovan	Sat 10.00am James & Benny Smyth
Mon 10.00am Lola Coleman	
Tues 8.00am Special Intention	Sat 6.30pm Dick & O'Connell & Peter & Mary Wilson
Tues 10.00am Paul Burke	
Wed 8.00am Special Intention	
Wed 10.00am Julia O'Keefe	Sun 8.30am Kathleen O'Connor
Thurs 8.00am Special Intention	Sun 11.00am Jenny & Donnie Stapleton & Jean Stapleton
Thurs 10.00am Paddy Barker	
Fri 8.00am Delia O'Donoghue	Margaret & Paddy Dillon
Fri 10.00am Michael & Kathleen Gaffney	Sun 6.30pm Thomas McGrane

Church of the Visitation Drynam *The Visitation of the BVM*

Mass Times for Drynam: Sun, 10.00am-11.00am(Irish)& 12 noon . Mon & Tues 9.20am
 Each Sunday during Lent the Liturgy group are creating a spiritual display in front of the altar to remind us of the Corporal Works of Mercy advocated by Christ in the Gospel. Today's theme is 'Shelter the Homeless'.



Loved in one's sins

The Prodigal son had no trophies to show his father. He was a failure. Worse – he was a sinner. He deserved to be punished. Yet punishment was the last thing he needed. When the father saw his son coming towards him, his heart went out to him, and next minute they were in each other's arms. It is an extraordinary experience to be loved in one's sins. Those who have experienced this kind of love, know something about the heart of God. (Fr. Flor McCarthy, SDB)

Fr. Michael Carey-8403378: Fr. Peter McCarron-8405948
Parish Secretary: Colette Stokes - Parish Office, Seatown Road-8407277
(Mon to Fri 9.15am-12.30pm & Tues-Thurs 2pm-4pm)
Sacristy: -8400547 (Mon -Sat 9.30am-9.55am and 10.30am to 10.50am)
Website: www.swords-parish.com Email: stcolmcilleschurch@gmail.com



4th Sunday of Lent

The Prodigal Son

"Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning"

Newsletter Sunday 6th March 2016

The Gospel for the Fourth Sunday of Lent gives us the parable of the Prodigal Son. The parable of the Prodigal Son has been called the greatest short story ever written. No matter how often we read it, or hear it, we cannot help but be deeply moved.

A certain man had two sons. The elder boy was a very hard.... The younger boy was a day dreamer.... His youth is passing away and he wanted to have his fling before it was too late. Filled with self-pity he goes to his father and asks for his share of the inheritance.

We can well imagine the sorrow of the father, as he reluctantly gives his son the inheritance. And so the young man sets out on his way to the big city. A country boy with a lot of money does not have a hard time finding friends who will help him spend this money. So he begins to "live it up." He soon learns what could be called the "law of diminishing returns" in this pleasure business. As time goes on, the same stimulus brings less pleasure. So he begins to "step up the pace" to "burn the candle at both ends."

Before too long his money runs out. But he is not worried. He has many good friends now. He has been picking up the tab all this time now let them pick it up. He soon discovers that with his money goes his friends. He's not the big hero anymore he is just another down and out. At this time a famine hits the country and he finds himself in want. Knowing nothing but farming, he hires himself out to one of the farmers of the place, who puts him out in the pig-sty to feed the pigs.

Picture to yourself this young man, alone, hungry, penniless, far from home. The picture of every sinner. We may sin with others but we pay the price alone. There are not many visitors to a pig sty, so he has a lot of time to think. His thoughts go back to his home, his father, his brother, the happiness he once had. He begins to contrast his present misery with his former happiness. "How many hired servants there are in my father's house who have more bread than they can eat, and here am I without anything to eat." Touched by grace, he says, "I will arise and go to my father, and say to him, 'I have sinned against God and against you. I am not worthy to be called your son, just make me as one of the hired servants.'"

So he begins the long, sorrowful journey back home. Picture to yourself this young man walking along the road, his chin hanging on his chest, kicking up the dust with his feet, trying to make up a story to tell his father. What should he say? That he was robbed, that he lost the money, that he made a bad business deal?

As he turns the last bend in the road, the father who has been waiting all this time for him, sees him coming down the road. He runs down the road, embraces his son and kisses him. The young man all embarrassed now, begins his little story. "Father, I have sinned..." But before he can get it out, the father shouts orders to the servants. "Bring out the best robe... Let us celebrate, for this my son was dead and has come back to life again, was lost and is found."



ADMINISTRATOR'S COLUMN

Year of Mercy – “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Lk.6:36)

Spiritual Works of Mercy

Avid readers of the newsletter will note that I am not writing about the Spiritual Works of Mercy – this will follow during the Easter Season. The Prodigal Son is a pivotal Gospel for this Year of Mercy



Year of Mercy

The eighth paragraph of the Papal encyclical – ‘*Misericordiae Vultus*’ continues “With our eyes fixed on Jesus and his merciful gaze, we experience the love of the Most Holy Trinity. The mission Jesus received from the Father was that of revealing the mystery of divine love in its fullness. “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8,16), John affirms for the first and only time in all of Holy Scripture. This love has now been made visible and tangible in Jesus’ entire life. His person is nothing but love, a love given gratuitously. The relationships he forms with the people who approach him manifest something entirely unique and unrepeatable. The signs he works, especially in favour of sinners, the poor, the marginalised, the sick, and the suffering, are all meant to teach mercy. Everything in him speaks of mercy. Nothing in him is devoid of compassion”.

Confirmation Mass

I welcome this weekend the boys and girls and their families to the 6.30pm Saturday Vigil Mass and the 6.30pm Sunday Evening Mass as part of our new Parish initiative as they journey towards the Sacrament of Confirmation. We anticipate their presence and look forward to seeing them and their families and praying with them.

Novena of Grace

The Novena of Grace to St. Francis Xavier continues to Saturday 12th March inclusive. The Novena Prayer will be prayed at all Masses. Grace can be seen as the power within us that gives us the strength to reach out to others in generosity, care and love. 'Grace' is a traditional term used in the Catholic Church for a favour or free gift from God. Christians often ask God for favours, or graces. In doing this we acknowledge that God is the giver of all gifts.

Mother's Day

Oscar Wilde has the following insight: “All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his.” (*The Importance of Being Earnest, 1895*)

What is Mercy?

Mercy is the quality of care for another, willingness to make an effort, even at great sacrifice, to ease another's pain, readiness to forgive, eagerness to help.

Congratulations to Dublin Priest now Bishop Paul Tighe on his episcopal ordination in the Vatican on Saturday last 27th February. Bishop Tighe was ordained in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and he is Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture

Church Cleaners

The next date for cleaning the Church is next **Friday 11th March** after the 10.00am Mass. Can the 'Team 1' cleaners for this first Friday of the month please turn up! Also if anyone has a half hour to spare you would be most welcome

Msze Swieta w Jeryku Polskim w Niedziele 13 Marzec o godz 18.45pm w St Cronan's Church, Brackenstown Road, Swords. (Spowiedz 18.15 - 18.40 pm)

The Bible's Most Important People

Barnabas – A Cypriot Christian who sold some land and gave the profit to the church. After Saul's conversion, Barnabas introduced this previous persecutor of the church to the apostles and spoke up for him. When the Jerusalem church heard that the gentiles of Antioch had been converted, they sent Barnabas, who became one of the 'prophets and teachers' at that church. Saul and Barnabas were sent on a missionary journey together

Mercy in the Gospel of Luke

All Ministers of the Word and of the Eucharist are invited to a reflection on the 'Year of Mercy' given by Fr. Paddy Boyle on **Thursday 10th March at 7.30pm** in St. Colmcille's. I would really appreciate if you could make this gathering- it will also be used to arrange the Easter Timetable. Indeed All Parishioners are invited

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Sometimes the joy of the Lenten season may become obscured by the passion and death of Jesus but today's liturgy, from its very first word, reminds us once again that we are in a season of joy. ***Our celebration of Lent is from a post-Easter point of view. Even in these days of the impending shadow of the cross, Christ has risen. The Father has vindicated him.***

Reflection - The language of the letters of Paul has caused some people to detect in them the contortions of spirit which the author must have gone through in order to leave behind him the life of a pious and zealous Jew and to accept Jesus as the Christ. ***His life is the story of the elder brother of the prodigal son*** who was converted by his father's words and actions to leave his comfortable existence and to spend the rest of his days in search of his lost brothers and sisters. (*Source: St. Paul's Missal*)

RECENTLY DECEASED

Please remember in your prayers those who have died recently:

Bernadette Corry

Swords Manor Crescent



A Mother's Day Prayer

Dear Jesus we thank you for mothers everywhere

For all who care for us day by day,

Let us not forget that you were a child and your mother was Mary.

We say thank you for mums across the world and in our country too,

Although we may not say it we think you are the best. So let us give grateful thanks And let our voices be heard.

For all Mums and Grans On this very special day. Amen (*Helen Middleton 2005*)

