

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 is only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found.”’

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAULS

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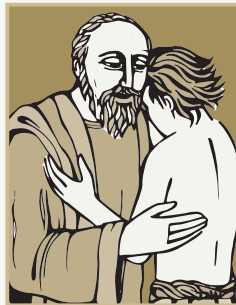
Breaking Open the Word

GOD’S LAVISH DELIGHT

This Sunday’s Gospel brings us to the very heart of Luke’s teaching—forgiveness and God’s delight in the return of the sinner. The Gospel’s introduction sets the scene: Jesus attracts and dines with moral reprobates. Is this mirroring what’s happening with Luke’s householders as they gather for the Lord’s Supper? Like Jesus, are they too being criticised by religious legislators?

Three parables follow. Our focus is on the third, the parable of two lost sons. Preachers often exclusively focus on the young son who demands his inheritance to leave the farm for a life of pleasure. The son is virtually treating his father as though dead when inheritances were usually bequeathed. He wants to completely cut family ties. We know what follows. The son’s need to address his chronic hunger and loneliness sitting with Earth’s most unclean creature, the pig, brings him to acknowledge his wrongdoing. He wants to return to his father’s farm not as a son but as a hired hand.

The father’s longing for his son’s return is palpable and completely upturns social expectation. It reflects God’s visceral response to the lost one who returns. The second older son is also lost. His adamant rejection of his younger brother’s behaviour and his unwillingness to join the celebration of the brother’s return flags an attitude circulating in Luke’s world. The father’s plea to this son for a change of heart is also a plea to the Gospel audience: Are we able to celebrate the joy of God’s lavish delight over those we would prefer to exclude?



Fr Michael Trainor

THE SAVING WORD

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT / C

30 MARCH 2025

FIRST READING

Josh 5: 9-12

A reading from the book of Joshua

The people of God went to the promised land and there kept the passover.

The Lord said to Joshua, ‘Today I have taken the shame of Egypt away from you.’

The Israelites pitched their camp at Gilgal and kept the Passover there on the fourteenth day of the month, at evening in the plain of Jericho. On the morrow of the Passover they tasted the produce of that country, unleavened bread and roasted ears of corn, that same day. From that time, from their first eating of the produce of that country, the manna stopped falling. And having manna no longer, the Israelites fed from that year onwards on what the land of Canaan yielded.

■ The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 33: 2-7. R. v. 9

R. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

1. I will bless the Lord at all times, / his praise always on my lips; / in the Lord my soul shall make its boast. / The humble shall hear and be glad. **R.**
2. Glorify the Lord with me. / Together let us praise his name. / I sought the Lord and he answered me; / from all my terrors he set me free. **R.**
3. Look towards him and be radiant; / let your faces not be abashed. / This poor man called; the Lord heard him / and rescued him from all his distress. **R.**

SECOND READING

2 Cor 5: 17-21

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

God reconciled us to himself through Christ.

For anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and now the new one is here. It is all God’s work. It was God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the work of handing on his reconciliation. In other words, God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not holding men’s faults against them, and he has entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled. So we

are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ’s name is: be reconciled to God. For our sake God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness of God.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Lk 15: 18

Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ! I will rise and go to my father and tell him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

GOSPEL

Lk 15: 1-3, 11-32

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Your brother here was dead and has come to life.

The tax collectors and the sinners were all seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained. ‘This man’ they said ‘welcomes sinners and eats with them.’ So he spoke this parable to them:

‘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



Contact us ...

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 Fr Peter Varengo sdb (Asst Parish Priest)
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 Joan Parr (Secretary) Virginia Carter (Secretary)

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 https://www.facebook.com/ourladyssoutherncross

St Joseph's Community

46 Otter Street, Collingwood
 Tel: 9973 5681 School: 9419 4918
 Principal: Matthew Shawcross

The Chapel of the Good Shepherd

St Heliers Street, Abbotsford Tel: 9417 2909

St John the Baptist Community

61 Queens Parade, Clifton Hill Tel: 9481 7333

If you would like to receive a pastoral visit from the parish priest, or a priest, or a seminarian, or co-parishioner, kindly leave a message at the administration office on 9481 7333 or email office@olsc.org.au

Collections for 22/23 March:

St John's \$387.65 St Joseph's \$965.70

Thank you to our parishioners and visitors.

Sacramental Reception ...

Baptism : Second and fourth Sundays of the month at 12 noon (book online ... olsc.org.au/baptisms)

Marriage: (book online ... olsc.org.au/weddings)

Reconciliation: every Friday 7:15—8:00pm

Confirmation, Reconciliation and Holy

Communion: Preparation for these Sacraments will be conducted at John's for State School children.

Email our office at office@olsc.org.au for further information.

Normal Mass Times at OLSC

St John's:

Tuesday to Friday at 9.15am, Saturday 8.30am, 6:00 pm
 Sunday at 9:00 am (Italian), 11:00 am and 5:00 pm

St Joseph's:

Monday to Saturday at 8:30 am Saturday 6:00 pm (English)
 Sunday at 9:00 am (Vietnamese)

Good Shepherd:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Sunday 9:30 am

At Our Lady of the Southern Cross, we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our parish.

We acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional land of the Wurundjeri people and offer our respects to the elders past, present and future. We recognise and respect the cultural heritage of this land.

Parish of Our Lady of the Southern Cross

March 29/30 2025

Year C

We remember Valerie Valls

Our beloved parishioner, who passed away on Thursday. Valerie was always warm, kind and graceful, and will be dearly missed.

Her requiem mass will be at St John's and the date will be known after Monday—please contact the office for details in case the funeral is during next week.



For those we remember...

Mass Intentions: Lou Salamito.

Condolences: We pray for the families and souls of those who have departed recently.

Anniversaries: Rosa Addamo, Lou Salamito.

For prayers of healing

Please remember the following in your prayers: Tony Addamo, Cecily Hollingworth, Mario Misurelli, Rosa Presta, Rachel Bartolo, and Victoria and Aldo Costanzo.

If you hear of any of your fellow parishioners who are not well, or who have been injured, please email us at office@olsc.org ,so that we can include them in our prayers.

New Salesians Rector Major

The Salesian priest Fabio Attard, is the new Rector Major of the Salesians and the 11th successor of Don Bosco. We pray he is a shining light on the community and protector of the vulnerable.

Baptism

On Sunday, 30 March, we will be celebrating the Baptism of Louis Colin Underwood.

We welcome Louis into the Church, and hope that he enjoys his life of love and faith.

Roster for Mass at St John's

Date	First Reading	Second Reading	Prayers of the Faithful	Special Minister
11 am				
March 30	Samoans	Samoans	Samoans	Samoans
April 6	Michael/Anna	Lucy C	Susan/John	Margaret
5 pm				
March 30	Daniel R	Akkermans	Marie R	Rafelina
April 6	Rita A	Vincent A	Giuliana	Daniel R
April 13	Justin Akkerman	Justin Akkerman	Berryman	Rafelina

Lenten Reconciliation Night

During the season of Lent, we are called to reflect on our faith journey, and renew our relationship with God and one another. As part of our spiritual journey, we warmly invite you to our Lenten Reconciliation Service — a sacred moment to experience God's boundless mercy and healing.

Come and join us on Friday, 4 April at St John's, Clifton Hill, for an hour of prayer before the Eucharistic Lord and to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Fr Brian Ahern SDB will lead this beautiful opportunity for prayer.

Let us walk this path of grace together as a parish family and prepare ourselves for the joy of Easter. Everyone is welcome!

Easter Services

PALM SUNDAY	
Saturday 12 th April	
6:00pm:	St. Joseph's (English)
6:00pm:	St. John's (English)
Sunday 13 th April	
9:00am:	St. John's (Italian)
9:00am:	St. Joseph's (Vietnamese)
11:00am:	St. John's (English)
5:00pm:	St. John's (English)
HOLY THURSDAY 17 th April	
7:30pm:	Combined Mass at St. John's
9:00pm:	Eucharistic Adoration at St. John's
GOOD FRIDAY 18 th April	
10:00am:	Way of the Cross at St. Joseph's
3:00pm:	The Liturgy of the Passion at St. John's (English)
3:00pm:	The Liturgy of the Passion at St. Joseph's (Vietnamese)
HOLY SATURDAY - EASTER VIGIL 19 th April	
6:00pm:	St. Joseph's (English)
7:30pm:	St. John's (English)
8:00pm:	St. Joseph's (Vietnamese)
EASTER SUNDAY 20 th April	
9:00am:	St. John's (Italian)
10:00am:	St. Joseph's (Vietnamese)
11:00am:	St. John's (English)

* There will be no 5:00pm Mass at St. John's

An invitation from our St Joseph's School

"We at St Joseph's School will be having a Stations of the Cross Reflection on Thursday 3rd of April at 2:30pm at our school. We warmly invite any parishioners that would like to come." Jessica Patti

URGENT PASTORAL NEED—Please call: 0401 887 115

Here I am, waiting for you

When my parents were alive, they used to be very excited whenever I told them that I am visiting them. As the days came nearer to my visit, there would be elaborate preparations that involved my siblings too. They would make sure that there was everything that I needed to make me feel welcomed. On my arrival, whether it was during the day or at night, my mum would offer me a splendid meal. These were clear signs to me that my parents and siblings longed for my homecoming! And every time, I returned home, their waiting transformed into indescribable joy, and so did mine.

The father of the parable of the Prodigal Son seems to be one who had been *waiting eagerly* for his younger son to return home, for we note that 'while his son was still long way off, he saw him and he ran to the boy'. His eager waiting symbolises hope and readiness to embrace his wayward son with grace and compassion. He doesn't dwell on the son's mistakes but is deeply focused on the reunion and restoration of the relationship. The act of running to greet his son upon his return shows his overwhelming joy and a willingness to reconcile without hesitation. The way the father celebrates his son's return highlights the *joy of waiting* and cherishing moments of reunion. He makes the boy feel that he is truly his son and *their home is where he belongs!*

While the parable focuses heavily on the younger son and the father's longing for his return, the father's interaction with the elder son is also crucial in the story. The father goes out to plead with him who refuses to enter *their home*. His gentle words remind the elder son of his own worth and inheritance, affirming that his love for him has never wavered. Fascinatingly, this parable has an open ending. It does not say whether the elder son responded to the father's plea and entered *their home* to join in the celebration of healing relationships. The *father waits* for his response too!

The father in the parable truly mirrors *our God who waits for us* with unwavering patience and boundless love. He waits for his younger son to return home and actively embraces him, reaffirming his value and worth, no matter the mistakes of the past. This reflects the profound truth that God's love isn't earned—it simply is. He then waits for his elder son to realise that his self-worth is not defined by what he does but by his inherent identity as beloved and an heir to the father's possessions. The way the father relates with his sons is a powerful invitation to see ourselves through a lens of grace and to trust that God is eternally telling us: *Here I am, waiting for you.*

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