

**The Reflection from Pastor Fr. John Carlos, Holy Cross Church, Harrison, NJ, March 27, 2022**

**THE PRODIGAL SON**



The story of the prodigal son and that wise and loving father mirrors humanity's relationship with God. God gave the people he created the freedom to make their own decisions, even bad decisions. And unfortunately, from the start, people have been deciding "to leave home" and go their own way. They have sinned.

God, like the father of our parable, allows his children to suffer the consequences of their bad decisions, not to punish them but rather to bring them to their senses. To help them realize that turning away from him, that leaving their father's house, only brings them into the pig sty of sin and selfishness.

When we sinners realize our need to return home, God the Father embraces us and restores us to himself. We see that in the healing and forgiving ministry of Jesus, a ministry that continues through the Church, especially through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

God allows us to make bad decisions. May the consequences we suffer give us the wisdom to see what the prodigal son eventually came to realize. True happiness and peace are only found when we are at home with the Father!

Feeling that we are part of the holy People of God, let us joyfully walk this journey of hope.

Father John Carlos

**四旬期第四主日 (3/27/2022)**

今天是四旬期第四主日。路加福音继续带领我们陪伴主耶稣基督向耶路撒冷走去，走向祂即将面临的苦难，圣死，和复活。一路走来我们也聆听祂对我们的训导。今天耶稣用比喻讲述一个父亲和两个儿子的故事。小儿子不务正业，做了犹太人认为最大逆不道的事情：父亲还活着竟要分家产，得了家产后，吃喝嫖赌，很快把所得的家产败光，沦落为给外邦人喂猪。要知道猪被犹太人视为不洁的动物。更遭的是，由于饥饿他竟羡慕猪所吃的豆荚。在他混得不能再惨的时候，他想起了他的父，终于回头认错，回到他父的身边。他的父张开双臂，以盛宴欢迎这个死而复生，

失而复得的小儿子。大儿子是一个大错不犯，却心胸狭窄，冷漠的人。父亲对他所生的嫉妒和抱怨给予解释和宽慰。

“浪子回头”的比喻彰显了天主对我们一总罪人无限的怜悯和仁慈。只要我们愿意悔改，祂总是张开双臂欢迎我们。这个比喻在另一个层面上也揭示了以色列在撒罗满后分裂的南国和北国。北国以色列被亚述人灭后，沦落到和异族通婚，拜邪神的地步，形成了后来的撒玛黎雅地区。撒玛黎雅人回应主耶稣基督的邀请，回头悔罪，承认耶稣是救主，如“浪子回头”比喻中的小儿子那样回到父的怀抱。而南国犹大国似乎对天主更忠信，以耶路撒冷和圣殿为中心，以她的骄傲和自认为的公义拒绝圣子耶稣。

今天的福音反思是：我们应该如何生活？向比喻中的小儿子那样勇于悔过而生活在与主新的蒙约中，还是向大儿子那样与法利塞人一样生活在旧约中？