

A short reflection on today's Gospel Luke 15:1-13, 11-32

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is a story of compassion, forgiveness and profound understanding. It is a story of separation and reunion. It is a story of transcendent love. The father's love for his repentant son who has found his way home transcends any need he might have had for his errant boy to prostrate himself before him and humbly admit his guilt. It is sufficient that he has crawled his way home. The father's love is greater than his son's transgressions. Surely this parable gathers to itself all that is at the heart of the meaning of our existence: love itself. It has been stated that this is the most important parable in the Bible – that if there was no other, this parable would suffice to convey to us the extent of God's love for His creation.

Which son are we? Are we the son who has squandered his inheritance on excess and debauchery, and crawls home, broken and crushed? Or are we the older son who thinks that duty and obligation are legitimate substitutes for loving relationships, the son who treats love as a limited commodity? I'm sure, in honesty, we can see ourselves in both sons. But can we see ourselves in the father who has waited patiently for his son's return, his arms ready to embrace his child in compassion, forgiveness and profound understanding?

Great God, greater than our sins, may we grow in compassion, forgiveness and understanding. May we reach out with healing hands to touch those around us who are crushed and broken. May we learn to truly forgive others as you forgive us. May we learn that love is unlimited, infinite, and that, as repentant souls, we are washed daily in your love. Amen

Prayer for Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood – In our first reading for the Fourth Sunday of Lent the Lord chooses David out of all the sons of Jesse. As David is anointed, he is "seized" by the spirit of the Lord who stays with him from that day on. We pray for those chosen by the Lord to be priests of the Diocese of Derry, that they will know and be faithful to the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives and ministry among God's people.

Lenten Programme 2025

- Monday to Friday:** Daily Mass at 8.00am, 10.00am, 1.00pm and 7.30pm
7.45am Morning Prayer of the Church
- Mondays:** 5.00pm -7.00pm Confessions & Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
- Tuesdays:** 7.00pm "Exploration into Theology – *Reading the Signs of the Times*" with Fr Brian Brady in The Cathedral Hall.
- Wednesdays:** 6.30pm Guided Meditation in the Mother Teresa Chapel
7.00pm "Reasons for Hope" - Talk by Fr Paul Farren in the Cathedral
- Thursdays:** 1.30pm Stations of the Cross led by Parish Schools
8.00pm Holy Hour of prayer, adoration, reflection and music with Fr Shaun Doherty in the Cathedral
- Fridays:** 7.00pm Stations of the Cross

'Fish Fridays' - as this is the day when Jesus was crucified you are invited to give up meat on the Fridays in Lent in remembrance of His sacrifice for us.

Sympathy

We offer our sympathy to the family and friends of:
Mary Morrison
Anne Mellon
Joseph Patrick Gallagher
May they rest in peace

Anniversaries

Please pray for the repose of the souls of:
Bridie Ferguson
Lila & Ken Crocker
Sean Carr
Lily O'Connor
James Hancock
Gerry Caldwell
James Sherrard
Willie Meehan
Mary Frew
May they rest in peace

Baptisms

We welcome as members of God's family:
Caylee Rose Morrison
Sophie Murray
Daire Patrick Martin

Readers 5th /6th April

06.15 pm Michael McCaul
07.30 pm Gerry O'Donnell/
Claire O'Kane
09.30 am Rua Sweeney/
Eva Maria Mallon
11.00 am McGinley Readers
12.30 pm Marie Canning
07.00 pm Marian Boyle

Collection

Last week's collection: £ 6,267
Parish Development: £ 1,056

Thank you

Fr Farren acknowledges with thanks the following donations for:

Mary's Meals: £200, £200, £20
Smile Train: £200
Trócaire: £100
Medical Missions of Mary: £20
Children in Crossfire: £40

Sick Visitation

Fr Shaun Doherty will attend the sick and housebound in his care during the coming week:

Tuesday: Tutor Close, Northland Parade, Northland Crescent, Edenmore Street, Glenbank Road, Glenbank Gardens, Glenside Gardens, Marlborough Road, Marlborough Avenue, Marlborough Street, Creggan Road, Helen Street, Oakfield Crescent

Friday: Glenowen Park, Cashelmore Park, Hatmore Park, Turasmore Park, Ardglenn, Nassau Crescent, Rosemount Gardens, Baldrick Crescent, Osborne Street, Lawrence Hill, Joseph Place, Beechwood Avenue

St Eugene's Cathedral Parish Draw – only 200 tickets available! 10 monthly draws at £20 per draw beginning May 2025. Entry fee for all draws can be paid in full or monthly. Entries paid in full will be entered into a draw for £500. Prizes per month £1,000, £500 and 5 x £100. The draw will raise funds for necessary repair, maintenance and upkeep of our beautiful Cathedral. Registration for the draw will close on 30th April 2025. For more information, please contact the Parish Office at 02871 262894 or email cathedral@derrydiocese.org.

Adult Safeguarding Training - We have invited Mrs Briega O'Neill, Safeguarding Co-ordinator for the Diocese of Derry to facilitate Adult Safeguarding Training. Adult Safeguarding Training is relevant to clergy, sacristans, church secretaries, adult prayer groups, senior choir leaders, members of St Vincent de Paul and Eucharistic Ministers to those people confined to their homes/nursing homes and all those in the parish who are interested in Safeguarding Adults at risk and in need of protection. Training will take place on Monday 7th April 2025 from 7.00pm-9.30pm in St Eugene's Cathedral Hall, Infirmary Road. Please contact the parish office on 028 71262894 or leave your name in the Sacristy by 3rd April 2025.

Derry Diocesan Youth Pilgrimage to Fatima: We are inviting young people aged 16 + to join us on pilgrimage to Fatima for 4 nights from 14 July to 18th July. This will be a unique experience for young people and an opportunity to engage with their peers from around the world in a faith context. Cost is £700 and there will be a budget plan to help with this. Names and deposit of £100 are required as soon as possible to secure a place. For more information or to book in please contact lizzie.rea@derrydiocese.org 00 44 2871264087.

The Annual Sister Clare Crockett Retreat will take place in St Columba's Church, Long Tower from Monday 31st March – Sunday 6th April. The theme of this year's retreat is '**Reflecting on the Eucharist with Sr Clare**'. There will be Mass at 7am & 10am (Monday to Friday). Evening prayer service with Benediction and guest speaker each evening at 7pm (Monday-Friday). A healing service with anointing of the sick will take place on Thursday 3rd April at 7pm. On Saturday 5th April, Service with Benediction led by Archbishop Eamon Martin at 3pm. The retreat will conclude on Sunday 6th April at 3pm with Mass celebrated by Bishop Donal McKeown. Everyone is welcome to attend in person or you can also stream the services online at www.longtowerchurch.org.

Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock will take place on **Sunday 15th June**. Further details will be available in the coming weeks.

The Padre Pio Prayer Group, Holy Family Church, Ballymagroarty, will meet on Tuesday 1st April 2025. Starting with Rosary at 6.45pm followed by Mass at 7.15pm. There will be an opportunity to be blessed with a first-class relic of St Pio while closing prayers are recited. Everyone is welcome.

The Annual Service of Intercession for the Dead will take place in the City Cemetery on Sunday, 22nd June 2025 at 3.00 pm.

St Eugene's Cathedral is monitored by CCTV cameras and by two live streaming cameras. Live streaming can be viewed online at www.churchservices.tv, www.watchmcnmedia or the parish website. The Diocese of Derry Privacy Notice is displayed on the parish website and Cathedral notice board, or you may obtain a copy from the Parish Office.

Safeguarding Notice: If you have any concerns regarding the Safeguarding of children or adults in need of protection within the Church please contact Marie Gormley, the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person (DLP) at 07596500793 or at mariegormley@derrydiocese.org or contact the Safeguarding Office, Diocesan Pastoral Centre, 164 Bishop Street, Derry, BT48 6UJ or PSNI (Police Service of Northern Ireland) 101 or Social Services: Gateway Services, Western HSC Trust, 71314090 and ask for the Duty Social Worker.

Priests: Fr Paul Farren, Fr Shaun Doherty