

- Sad news this weekend that Gerard Kendall passed away sometime early Saturday morning.
- He had been sleeping in his recliner and simply passed away. When I went down there, it looked like all that was missing was some snoring, he looked so peaceful.
- So pray for his family...especially Diane. We're not sure yet when the funeral will be, but we'll publish it on our website ASAP.
- Knowing Gerard's love for God and love for Mary, I couldn't help but think that it was hardly coincidental that Gerard pass away on the morning of a first Saturday—a day dedicated to Our Blessed Mother.
- And, indeed, as I looked upon him in his chair, it seemed almost as if Mary called to him: "Gerard...it's time to come in, son."

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- Yet...Jesus exhorts us many times in the Gospels: "Watch; you know neither the day nor the hour..."...to be always ready to be called home...
  - ...and while we sorrow at the death of a friend or loved one, God, as the giver of life, allots to us an undetermined amount of time on this earth...so it is up to us to live each moment well.
  - I was reading of four Sisters of Charity who were murdered in Yemen a couple of days ago during a siege of the nursing home in which they worked. Even Pope Francis has called them martyrs for Christ.

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- Now this parable of the prodigal son which we just heard—or the parable of the Loving Father, as it sometimes known—is thus apropos for today...showing us the wonderful mercy and love of the father.
  - The young son arrogantly demanded his share of his inheritance even before his father died...

- ...and, yet, the loving and indulgent father complies...giving his son freedom to choose his path in life—even though he knows his son’s recklessness and that he will likely abuse that freedom.
- Yet, the selfish son breaks all ties with the father...caring little for the love that his father had given him all his life...
- ...and he squanders his inheritance...giving in to a hedonistic (a sinful) lifestyle...believing falsely it will lead him to fulfillment and happiness...no commandments...no authority to obey...no responsibility.
- ...And, so very predictably, he is soon down and out. The world used him up and spit him out when it had squeezed him dry.
- And now, reduced to feeding swine...he even hungers for their slop, and would gladly nose in with the pigs at the trough beside them. But no one gives him even that, for even the pigs are seen as of greater value than he.

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- The moral? That to abandon morality leads not to freedom, but to slavery...slavery to passions, just as the young man in the parable.
  - The totally rudderless youth (or older) becomes a wretched slave...longing for slop.
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  - But, at least Jesus’ parable has a pleasant ending. The prodigal son realizes his error...that even his father’s servants—bound to the Father’s will and commandments—are actually much freer and happier than he himself has become.
  - The Gospel then says: “Coming to his senses...”... “coming out of his irrational foolishness”—he recognizes the futility into which he has fallen...that his father’s house is where he truly belongs. THAT is where his life finds true care and meaning. THAT is where love is.
  - Lack of discipline...lack of respect of his father...unbridled pursuit of his passions...has led him not upward, but downward to the level of animality.

- So, he repents...and as the father sees him coming even from a great distance, he throws aside all decorum and reserve and RUNS to meet his child...such is the father's love.
- And when the son repents and confesses—the father accepts him home again and orders a celebration...for the son who was “dead” now lives again.
- In the parable the “finest robe” is given to the son—a symbol of the lost robe of grace with which we are clothed in baptism, but which we forfeit through sin—returned to US when we repent, confess and come back to God.
- Now part of that “coming back to God” is also forgiveness, and like the father to the elder son, the Almighty Father speaks to us through the words of Jesus: “...*if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*” (Mat 6:15 RSV)
- For Jesus also tells us: “...*forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you; ...For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.*” (Luk 6:37-38 RSV)
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- The father, of course, is an image of our true and merciful and loving Father in Heaven...always ready to forgive...always ready to run to receive us home again.
  - But our time is short...and, as we see in Gerard's passing in his early 60s, shorter for some than for others.
  - So would not the wise man...the wise woman...seek God and goodness and righteousness at the earliest opportunity...knowing that the silver thread of life is easily broken...our grasp upon this world so tenuous.
  - A disease, an accident...or simply falling asleep in a recliner—we cannot know when.

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- Like the Father with the prodigal son, the Almighty Father and God pleads with us with the words of the prophet Isaiah: “*Come*

*now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.*” (Isa 1:18 RSV)

Repent, return to me, and come home.

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- But we mustn't delay...
- ...because one day there were three young devils talking to Satan about their plans to tempt and ruin men.
- The first said, “I will tell them there is no God!” Satan replied, “That will not delude many, for they know that there is a God.”
- The second said, “I will tell men there is no hell!” Satan replied, “You will deceive no one; men know there is a hell for sin.”
- The third said, “I will tell men there is no hurry.” And Satan said: “Go! You will ruin them by the thousands.”
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- The joy of loving God passes all other joys in life...if we only let it and sincerely seek it. And that joy that we receive here on earth is only the beginning.
- For, as we remember Gerard and our Sisters of Charity today—as well as all who die in Christ—we well remember, and are comforted, by those words of scripture: “*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him.*” (1 Cor 2:9)

## Reading I

[Jos 5:9a, 10-12](#)

The LORD said to Joshua,  
“Today I have removed the reproach of Egypt from you.”  
While the Israelites were encamped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho,  
they celebrated the Passover  
on the evening of the fourteenth of the month.  
On the day after the Passover,  
they ate of the produce of the land  
in the form of unleavened cakes and parched grain.  
On that same day after the Passover,  
on which they ate of the produce of the land, the manna ceased.  
No longer was there manna for the Israelites,  
who that year ate of the yield of the land of Canaan.

## Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 34: 2-3, 4-5, 6-7](#)

R. (9a) **Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

I will bless the LORD at all times;  
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.  
Let my soul glory in the LORD;  
the lowly will hear me and be glad.

R. **Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

Glorify the LORD with me,  
let us together extol his name.  
I sought the LORD, and he answered me  
and delivered me from all my fears.

R. **Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy,  
and your faces may not blush with shame.  
When the poor one called out, the LORD heard,  
and from all his distress he saved him.

R. **Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.**

## Reading II

[2 Cor 5:17-21](#)

Brothers and sisters:  
Whoever is in Christ is a new creation:  
the old things have passed away;  
behold, new things have come.  
And all this is from God,  
who has reconciled us to himself through Christ  
and given us the ministry of reconciliation,

namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ,  
not counting their trespasses against them  
and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

So we are ambassadors for Christ,  
as if God were appealing through us.

We implore you on behalf of Christ,  
be reconciled to God.

For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin,  
so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

## Gospel

[Lk 15:1-3, 11-32](#)

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus,  
but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying,

“This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

So to them Jesus addressed this parable:

“A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father,  
‘Father give me the share of your estate that should come to me.’

So the father divided the property between them.

After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings  
and set off to a distant country

where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation.

When he had freely spent everything,  
a severe famine struck that country,  
and he found himself in dire need.

So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens  
who sent him to his farm to tend the swine.

And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed,  
but nobody gave him any.

Coming to his senses he thought,  
‘How many of my father’s hired workers  
have more than enough food to eat,  
but here am I, dying from hunger.

I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him,

“Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

I no longer deserve to be called your son;  
treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.’”

So he got up and went back to his father.

While he was still a long way off,  
his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion.

He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him.

His son said to him,

‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you;

I no longer deserve to be called your son.’

But his father ordered his servants,  
‘Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him;  
put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.  
Take the fattened calf and slaughter it.  
Then let us celebrate with a feast,  
because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again;  
he was lost, and has been found.’  
Then the celebration began.  
Now the older son had been out in the field  
and, on his way back, as he neared the house,  
he heard the sound of music and dancing.  
He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean.  
The servant said to him,  
‘Your brother has returned  
and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf  
because he has him back safe and sound.’  
He became angry,  
and when he refused to enter the house,  
his father came out and pleaded with him.  
He said to his father in reply,  
‘Look, all these years I served you  
and not once did I disobey your orders;  
yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends.  
But when your son returns  
who swallowed up your property with prostitutes,  
for him you slaughter the fattened calf.’  
He said to him,  
‘My son, you are here with me always;  
everything I have is yours.  
But now we must celebrate and rejoice,  
because your brother was dead and has come to life again;  
he was lost and has been found.’”