

- How that line speaks to me: “*While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion...[and] ran to his son [and] embraced him...*”
- Today our reading blaze a direct line of the path from sin to salvation—the sin of the Israelites and the prayer of Moses. Our reponsorial psalm describing anguish of the knowledge of sin and the desire of repentance. Paul recounting his own sinfulness and then conversion. And the welcome home by the Father in the prodigal son parable.
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- All of our readings today point to God willingness to forgive...indeed, His intense longing to forgive sins...and yet, that forgiveness is conditioned on our own repentance and conversion.
- In our first reading we have the Israelites on the Exodus...camped out at the foot of Mt. Sinai. They had just witnessed unimaginable miracles of the plagues of Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea...had eaten miraculously-supplied food—bread and meat in the form of manna and quail, sufficient for many tens of thousands of persons each day—and had drunk miraculously-supplied water in the desert—and still they defied God.
- And yet, by the prayer of one man—Moses—God’s wrath is turned from destroying them in their ingratitude and disobedience.
- As St. James tells us: “*The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects.*” (James 5:16 RSV)
- [the prayer of mothers: St. Monica, Hagar, Hannah. The Syro-Phoenician woman. Mary.]
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- The events of the Exodus, of course, foreshadow the infinitely-greater work of Jesus Christ—who would perform miracles, provide us with the miraculous food and drink of the Eucharist, and turn away God’s

absolute justice by His own sacrifice, and His prayer from the cross:
“Father, forgive them; they know not what they do”...and thus open the road for us to repentance and conversion of our own...to continue our journey to the true Promised Land.

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- Now St. Paul bridges the first and third readings today by remembrance of his own initial hatred of Jesus and His followers...but by the grace of God was given the vision of Christ which led him to realize his error and to repent and convert...to become the greatest evangelist for Jesus and Christianity the world has ever known save Christ Himself.
- Because, through Paul’s letters in scripture, God speaks to us through His Holy Spirit which guided Paul in the words he wrote...which have led Christians to belief for 2000 years.
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- And then we have...the story of the Prodigal Son.
- At times I wish that I could video some of the outpouring of God’s grace I see in the confessional—sinners hardened for years and decades...and, like St. Paul, touched by a working of God’s grace...to come in tears of repentance...and begin that often arduous climb of conversion.
- It is simply a joy that I sometimes hear: “Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been (20, 30, or even 40 or more) years since my last confession.”
- *“While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion...[and] ran to his son [and] embraced him...”*
- The prodigal child coming down the road...and in the confessional, Our Father runs to meet him. He who was lost, is now found.
- [story: grandmother watching anxiously for arrival of family]

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- But repentance and conversion are non-negotiables...that realization and sorrow at offending our God and Father and our fellow Man, and the ardent desire to turn to the Good—to follow His Word—in observance of His moral law and the teaching of Jesus, His Christ.
- And...to ourselves forgive as we long to be forgiven.
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- I saw a comic the other day of a wife scolding her husband: “Don’t do like you did last time” Husband: “Okay, okay; you said you were going to forgive and forget.” Wife: “I did forgive and forget. I just don’t want you to forget that that I forgot and forgave!”
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- Let us not be like that, ever nursing hurts and a grudges...remembering that, like Jesus, His disciples are to serve and not to be served.
- Nor be like the older brother in the parable, refusing forgiveness, but to be as Christ, and say to God and to ourselves: “*Forgive them; they know not what they do.*”
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- The path to life is this path of repentance, forgiveness and conversion. Only in these do we find contentment—both in this life, and in eternity.
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- This is the road which leads to Our Father’s embrace.
- This is the road that leads us to salvation.
- This is the road that will lead us home.

Reading 1

[Ex 32:7-11, 13-14](#)

The LORD said to Moses,
"Go down at once to your people,
whom you brought out of the land of Egypt,
for they have become depraved.
They have soon turned aside from the way I pointed out to them,
making for themselves a molten calf and worshiping it,
sacrificing to it and crying out,
'This is your God, O Israel,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt!'
"I see how stiff-necked this people is," continued the LORD to Moses.
Let me alone, then,
that my wrath may blaze up against them to consume them.
Then I will make of you a great nation."

But Moses implored the LORD, his God, saying,
"Why, O LORD, should your wrath blaze up against your own people,
whom you brought out of the land of Egypt
with such great power and with so strong a hand?
Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,
and how you swore to them by your own self, saying,
'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky;
and all this land that I promised,
I will give your descendants as their perpetual heritage.'"
So the LORD relented in the punishment
he had threatened to inflict on his people.

[Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 17, 19](#)

Responsorial Psalm

R. (Lk 15:18) **I will rise and go to my father.**
Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;
in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense.
Thoroughly wash me from my guilt
and of my sin cleanse me.

R. **I will rise and go to my father.**
A clean heart create for me, O God,
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.
Cast me not out from your presence,
and your Holy Spirit take not from me.

R. **I will rise and go to my father.**

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;
a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.
R. I will rise and go to my father.

[1 Tm 1:12-17](#)

Reading 2

Beloved:

I am grateful to him who has strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord,
because he considered me trustworthy
in appointing me to the ministry.

I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and arrogant,
but I have been mercifully treated
because I acted out of ignorance in my unbelief.

Indeed, the grace of our Lord has been abundant,
along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance:

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Of these I am the foremost.

But for that reason I was mercifully treated,
so that in me, as the foremost,

Christ Jesus might display all his patience as an example
for those who would come to believe in him for everlasting life.

To the king of ages, incorruptible, invisible, the only God,
honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

[Lk 15:1-32 or 15:1-10](#)

Gospel

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 he addressed this parable.

"What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them
would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert
and go after the lost one until he finds it?

And when he does find it,
he sets it on his shoulders with great joy

and, upon his arrival home,
he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them,
'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.'

I tell you, in just the same way
there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents

than over ninety-nine righteous people
who have no need of repentance.

"Or what woman having ten coins and losing one
would not light a lamp and sweep the house,
searching carefully until she finds it?
And when she does find it,
she calls together her friends and neighbors
and says to them,
'Rejoice with me because I have found the coin that I lost.'
In just the same way, I tell you,
there will be rejoicing among the angels of God
over one sinner who repents."

Then he said,
"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;

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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.'"

or

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