



GOSPEL

Luke 15:1-32

OTHER READINGS

Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14; 1 Timothy 1:12-17

MONTHLY EXAMEN

We invite you to prayerfully reflect:

Presence

Become aware that God’s presence is active at each moment of your life, looking at you with love, desirous of speaking directly to your heart. How do you feel at this moment?

Ask

Ask God for the grace to see the ways God is working in your life.

Gratitude

Be grateful. Thank God for the gifts, both big and small of the day. What are you most grateful for today?

Review

Trust that God is with you at each moment of day, during the good and challenging moments. God never abandons you. What were the good moments of today? What were the greatest challenges of today?

Respond

You are not stuck. Tomorrow is a new day. Ask God to give you the grace to be the loving and generous person you were created to be. What can you do tomorrow to be more generous and loving?

Conclude with the Sign of the Cross.



LOST & FOUND

Sometimes, especially in times of trial, we go through life with the sense that God is distant, and we spend time “searching” for His presence. It almost feels like God is hiding from us. But how often do we stop and consider that God is searching for us even more than we’re searching for God?

Luke’s Gospel offers an incredible image that describes God’s persistence in seeking us out. Jesus proposes that God is like a shepherd that leaves behind ninety-nine healthy sheep to search for just one that has become lost. When he finds the stray sheep, he “sets it on his shoulders with great joy,” carries it home, and throws a party! Likewise, Jesus tells us that there is “more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.” Regardless of our past, we can always be assured that God wants to be with us and takes great joy in our presence!

Sometimes, God might seem distant because we’re the ones who run away from Him. Have you ever noticed how quickly birds fly away from people who approach them? Just like birds are afraid of anything bigger than they are, it is easy for us to become afraid in the presence of a very big God. Maybe that’s because of guilt or because we’re afraid of what God might ask us to do. In any case, God is always reaching out to us in our brokenness, desiring to heal us. If you feel lost, trust that God has already found you.

R. Lorenz, Jesuit Scholastic at Ciszek Hall, Fordham University

SPEAK WITH YOUR HANDS

WHAT IS PRAYER LIKE?

St. Peter Claver, who we celebrate on September 9th, was a Jesuit missionary in Colombia during the 17th century. His main apostolate was caring for those who were enslaved by European colonists in Cartagena. Although Pope Paul III repeatedly condemned slavery, colonists continued to enslave Africans under inhumane conditions. These terrible conditions didn't prevent St. Peter Claver from ministering to them.

Upon arrival, he immediately went into the slave ships to bring food, medicine, and other types of aid. It is said that during his ministry he baptized over 300,000 enslaved persons. While he lived in Cartagena, he requested to reside in the quarters of those enslaved. He famously said during his ministry, "We must speak to them with our hands, before we try to speak to them with our lips."

When we read St. Paul's words from his first letter to the Corinthians, we can't help but think of St. Peter Claver as one who modeled being "all things to all." He became, as St. Paul says beautifully, "a slave to all." He did not do so for his own glory or honor. St. Peter Claver became a slave to those enslaved out of love: a pure, unconditional love that was fueled by the Gospel. He communicated that love, not through any fancy words, but through simple acts of love. What are some ways you can communicate that same love to others? Take some time and ask God for the graces to speak His love to all who deserve it.

*C. Germosen,
Seminararian of the Archdiocese of New York*

How do you pray? Do you sometimes pray as a child asking their parents for help? Or maybe you pray to God as a friend, sharing with God all your thoughts and feelings. Whether you pray as a friend or as a child of God, they are all very good prayers. There is no wrong way to pray, as long as at the center of your prayer is God.

Fr. Jim Martin, SJ tells us of a story of how beautifully his mother prayed. In his book **Jesuit Guide to Almost Everything**, Fr. Jim one day noticed that his mother had been praying the rosary every day. Now, Fr. Jim had been learning the Ignatian Contemplation, which is a way of praying with imaginations, and thought that he wanted to teach his mother this way that is more advanced than praying the rosary. Fr. Jim asked his mother, "Mom, what happens when you pray the rosary?" She said in reply, "When I pray the rosary, I look at God, and God looks at me." Fr. Jim felt embarrassed.

Prayer is like that. Looking at God, looking for God, and feeling God's gaze on us. Praying is remembering that God is with us, right now. It can be done wherever we are. We can pray while walking, sitting, when we are alone, or when we are with others. It can be hard to pray sometimes because of distractions around us. When it is hard to pray, we can come before God with all our hardships. God knows that we have limits. Because of this, God will come to us where we are, for God is truly Immanuel, God who is with us.

*D. Park, Jesuit Scholastic at Ciszek Hall,
Fordham University*

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