

4th Sunday in Lent

March 14, 2010

“Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.”

--- *Luke 15:1-3, 11-32*

The Fourth Sunday of Lent marks the midpoint in the Lenten preparation for the resurrection feast. Each of today's three readings characterizes one of the many facets of Easter joy.

In the First Reading from Joshua, the people of God are portrayed as celebrating for the first time the feast of their freedom in their own land; their joy is one of promises fulfilled.

In the Second Reading from Paul, the apostle joyfully proclaims the effects of Jesus' saving act, i.e., the reconciliation of all peoples to the Father. We are to be ambassadors for Christ and ministers of reconciliation to one another. We must all be reconciled to God so that we might “become the righteous of God in him.”

In the Gospel, the joy is that of “coming home” and rediscovering a father's forgiving and unconditional love. Although Lent is a season of penance, it is also marked by the joyful enthusiasm and confidence today's readings communicate. In the Gospel, Jesus tells his followers the parable of the prodigal son. He reminds them it is never too late to repent, to be received back by a loving father, and to enjoy his presence forever.

God says, “All is forgiven. Come home.”

Readings:

Joshua 5:9, 10-12 <http://www.usccb.org/nab/bible/joshua/joshua5.htm>

Psalm 34, 2-7 <http://www.usccb.org/nab/bible/psalms/psalm34.htm>

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

<http://www.usccb.org/nab/bible/2corinthians/2corinthians5.htm>

Luke 15:1-3; 11-32 <http://www.usccb.org/nab/bible/luke/luke15.htm>