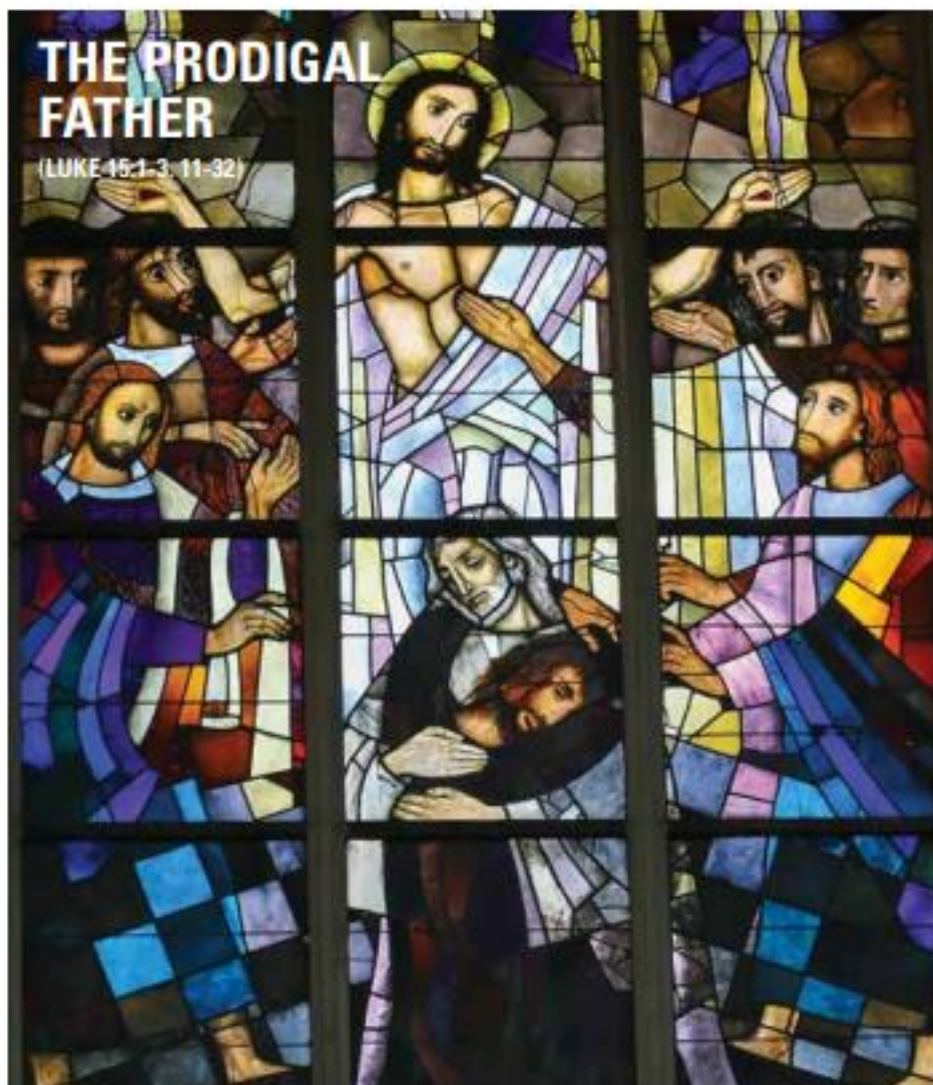


# Sunday Message

## THE WORD

Year C • Season Colour: Rose/Purple • Psalter Week 4



Stained glass window in the Church of St Andrew in Antwerp, Belgium, depicting Jesus and the Parable of the Prodigal Son

Our gospel reading today is set in the context of the critics of Jesus muttering that he is associating with people whom the authorities consider less than acceptable, namely “tax collectors and sinners”.

The former were unpopular as they were regarded as collaborators with the Roman occupiers, and anyone who was not observing the proper religious customs was deemed to be a ‘sinner’. This did not mean that the person concerned was particularly immoral but simply that, for some reason or other, they were not fulfilling the requirements of the Law. Yet these are the people who are responding positively to Jesus and his message. Jesus shares food with them, a clear signal in that culture that they are welcomed and accepted by him and, by implication, by God. His critics understand the significance of his actions and that is what infuriates them.

Jesus uses the parable of the Lost Son to illustrate the meaning of his action and of his message. A better title for this well-loved story would be ‘The Prodigal Father’. The word ‘prodigal’ is not common and many people think that it means repentant or regretful, but in fact the basic meaning is wasteful. It is not the irresponsible young man who is the centre of the story; rather, it is the anxious parent who has been looking out for his return, who casts aside his own dignity to rush to meet him, who won’t listen to any words of apology, who throws an extravagant party to welcome him home. Jesus tells us that this is God’s attitude towards those who have made a mess of their lives, and that all that God can say is ‘Welcome home!’ ■

### SAY

The father ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly

(Luke 15:21)

### LEARN

Jesus’ critics are usually members of the religious establishment.

Tax collectors were unpopular as they were regarded as collaborators with the occupying Roman authorities.

The term ‘sinners’ covered anyone who did not, or could not, observe the Law properly: it did not necessarily imply serious moral failings.

### DO

Examine your conscience about your Lenten resolution: does your penance help you to feel closer to God and make you more aware of God’s presence?

### REFLECT

The parables are traps: we are told a story and invited to make a judgment. Then Jesus says, ‘That’s all very well, but have you thought about it from this point of view?’ Many of us may sympathise with the elder brother, who has kept all the rules, obeyed his father and feels aggrieved at the welcome extended to his errant sibling on the latter’s return.

What emerges from the dialogue between the father and the elder son is that there is little affection on the part of the son: he won’t go into the house where the welcome party is taking place; he talks about “slaving” for his father and never disobeying him; he refers to the other young man as “this son of yours” rather than “my brother”. So all that his faithful observance has done is to turn him into an embittered person, at odds with everyone else.

We note that the story is left unfinished. The father pleads with him to change his mind and attitude. Whether he does or not is left up to the reader. Each of us is invited to finish the narrative for ourselves. But the real question which Jesus is asking is ‘What would you do?’ This is part of our Lenten challenge. ■

# Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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## Fourth Sunday of Lent – 27<sup>th</sup> March 2022

### Weekend masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet 7:30pm Leitrim  
Sun 9:00am Gargory 11:00am Dromara

### Weekday masses

Mon 9:00am Leitrim 7:30pm Dechomet  
Tues 9:00am Dromara  
Wed 7:30pm Leitrim  
Fri 7:30pm Dromara

### Anniversary Masses

#### Dechomet

Sat 26<sup>th</sup> Stephen McElroy  
Mon 28<sup>th</sup> Patrick Hugh Morgan

#### Leitrim

Sat 26<sup>th</sup> Kathleen Cunningham

#### Gargory

Sun 27<sup>th</sup> Brigid King

#### Dromara

Sun 27<sup>th</sup> Art Gilmore; Paddy and Eileen Dillon  
Tues 29<sup>th</sup> Patsy McEvoy and Deceased Family Members  
Fri 1<sup>st</sup> Stephen O'Hare (Finnis)

### Cemetery Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May

### St Michael's Hall

The Hall is ready for use. The total cost for the deep clean, the cleaning of 200 chairs, treatment of water and updating the fire safety equipment was £3,160.

### Dromore Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock

Sun 29<sup>th</sup> May

### Rosary at the Grottos

We will pray the Holy Rosary each day in May, at 8pm (or a time that suits you), at hundreds of grottos around the Island of Ireland. We pray to honour our Blessed Mother, and to ask her to wrap her mantle of protection around Ireland, and to bring peace to our troubled world. Simply register your grotto at: [www.coastalrosaryireland.ie](http://www.coastalrosaryireland.ie)

### Collections

Parish

### Dromara

£497

### Drumgooland

£801

**New Boxes of Envelopes** are ready for distribution.

These begin on the second weekend of April.

Thank you for your very generous support over the past two years. If you prefer to pay by standing order/direct debit, please email the parish and the forms will be sent to you.

### Irish Bishops request for a Special Collection to support humanitarian efforts in Ukraine

This collection will be taken up after the masses on the weekend of 26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> Mar.

If anyone wishes to put money in an envelope, simply mark it 'Ukraine' and place it in the normal basket or leave it through the letterbox in the parochial house. Any cheque donation should be made out to either 'The Parish of Dromara' or 'The Parish of Drumgooland'.

Proceeds of this Special Collection will be directed to Caritas Internationalis, which is the helping hand of the Church on the ground in the Ukraine and the surrounding region.

**Congratulations** to all the children who celebrated their First Confession over the past few weeks.

### Confirmations

Tues 5<sup>th</sup> Apr 6pm Leitrim - St Matthew's  
Wed 6<sup>th</sup> Apr 6pm Leitrim - St Mary's  
Fri 8<sup>th</sup> Apr 6pm Finnis - St Michael's

### Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service

Is recruiting interested people for marriage preparation facilitators to assist in the provision of Marriage Preparation Programmes.

Application forms are available by contacting: [marriagepreparation@accord.ie](mailto:marriagepreparation@accord.ie)

Selections will take place in June of this year with training commencing in September.

This year Accord is celebrating 60 years supporting couples and families.

Please contact us for any support you may need: [www.accord.ie](http://www.accord.ie)

**Gargory Altar Society** Apr - Marion