

“The Evangelist Luke has gathered in this Chapter (15) three parables on divine mercy: the two shortest ones which he has in common with Matthew and Mark are the Parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin; the third, lengthy, articulate and proper to him alone, is the famous parable of the merciful Father, commonly known as the parable of the "Prodigal Son".

In this Gospel passage, we almost seem to hear Jesus' voice revealing to us the Face of his Father and our Father. Basically, this was the reason he came into the world: to speak to us of the Father; to make him known to us, his lost children, and to revive in our hearts the joy of belonging to him, the hope of being forgiven and restored to our full dignity, the desire to dwell for ever in his house which is also our house.

Jesus recounted the three parables of mercy because the Scribes and Pharisees were muttering bad things about him since they had noticed he permitted sinners to approach him and even eat with him (cf. *Lk 15: 1-3*). He then explained in his typical language that God does not want even one of his children to be lost and that his soul overflows with joy whenever a sinner is converted.

True religion thus consists in being attuned to this Heart, "rich in mercy", which asks us to love everyone, even those who are distant and our enemies, imitating the Heavenly Father who respects the freedom of each one and draws everyone to himself with the invincible power of his faithfulness.

This is the road Jesus points out to all who want to be his disciples: "Judge not... condemn not... forgive, and you will be forgiven; give and it will be given to you.... Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (*Lk 6: 36-38*). In these words we find very practical instructions for our daily conduct as believers.

In our time, humanity needs a strong proclamation and witness of God's mercy. Beloved John Paul II, a great apostle of Divine Mercy, prophetically intuited this urgent pastoral need. He dedicated his [Second Encyclical](#) to it and throughout his Pontificate made himself a missionary of God's love to all peoples.

After the tragic events of 11 September 2001, which darkened the dawn of the third millennium, he invited Christians and people of good will to believe that God's Mercy is stronger than all evil, and that only in the Cross of Christ is the world's salvation found.

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy, whom we contemplated yesterday (September 15) as Our Lady of Sorrows at the foot of the Cross, obtain for us the gift of always trusting in God's love and help us to be merciful as our Father in Heaven is merciful.

Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus September 16, 2007