

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Celebrating well



Gathering Once More

Loving God help us to teach our children
that you love us totally and unconditionally.

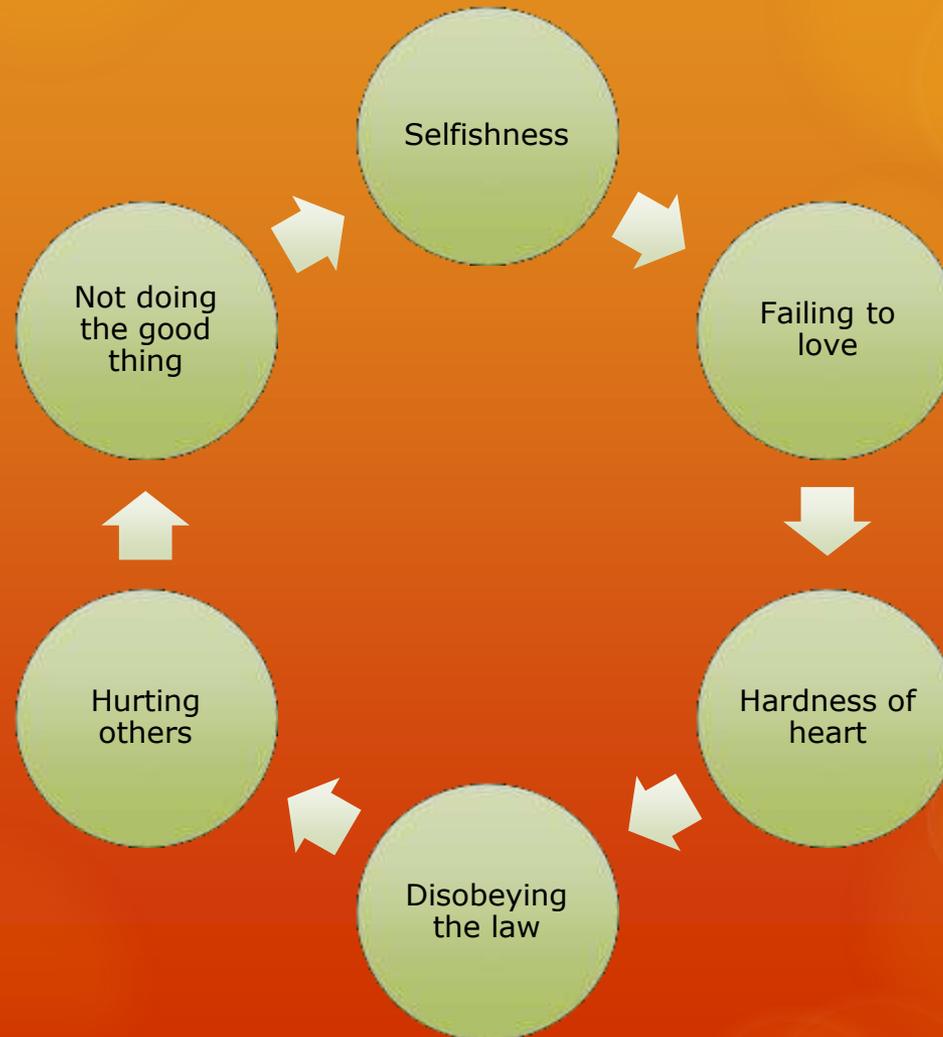
Help us to encourage our children to grow in love
and to learn how to say sorry
knowing that you always forgive.

Give us the courage to pray with our children
and to share our faith with them
as we journey together.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. AMEN



THE S WORD - Sin in our lives?



SIN and CHOICE



Every day we make all sorts of choices, some right, some wrong.

When I choose to put myself first at the expense of other – it can lead to sin

When I choose to go against what I know is right – it can lead to sin

When I choose to ignore the place of God in my life – it can lead to sin

When I choose to ignore the needs of others – it can lead to sin

SIN IS..

Sin

is when I choose
to walk away
from God –
the God
who gives
me life



LISTENING TO OUR INNER VOICE – CONSCIENCE

Deep within their conscience men and women discover a law which they have not laid upon themselves and which they must obey.

Its voice, ever calling them to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, tells them inwardly at the right moment: do this, shun that.

For they have in their hearts a law inscribed by God. Their dignity rests in observing this law, and by it they will be judged.

Their conscience is people's most secret core, and their sanctuary.

There they are alone with God whose voice echoes in their depths.

Gaudium et Spes 16

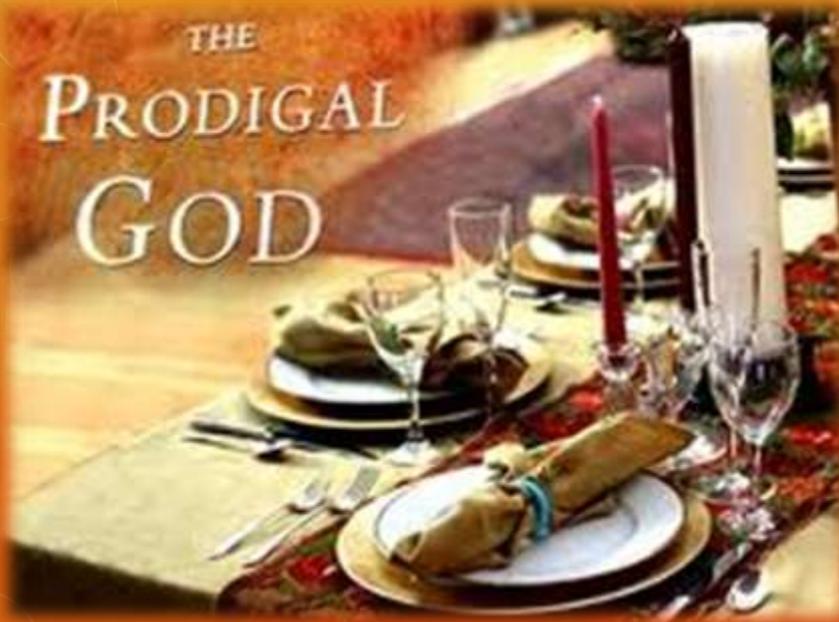


EXAMINATION of CONSCIENCE

- Here are some questions we can ask ourselves as we sit in God's presence:
- When have I acted selfishly or hurtfully in my life with family, friends, colleagues?
- When have I not acted to prevent someone else being hurt in some way?
- When were there times when I should have said 'sorry', and did not do so.
- When do I affirm others' goodness or do I mostly see only the negative?

- Have there been times when I have turned away from the Gospel message, or decided not live by its teaching so as to suit my own needs
- When have I judged the actions of others, when only God can truly understand them?
- Am I more likely to blame others when things go wrong for me?
- When I am trying to teach my children to forgive, be generous or kind, do my actions reflect my words?

THE PRODIGAL



What choices?

For whom?

The tax collectors and the sinners were seeking the company of Jesus to hear what he had to say, and the Pharisees and the scribes complained:

'This man' they said
'welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

So Jesus spoke this parable to them:

A man had two sons. The younger son said to his father,

'Father, let me have the share of the estate that would come to me.'

So the father divided the property between them.

A few days later, the younger son got together everything he had and left for a distant country where he squandered his money on a life of debauchery.



What choices?

For whom?

When he had spent it all, that country experienced a severe famine, and now he began to feel the pinch, so he hired himself out to one of the locals who put him on his farm to feed the pigs.

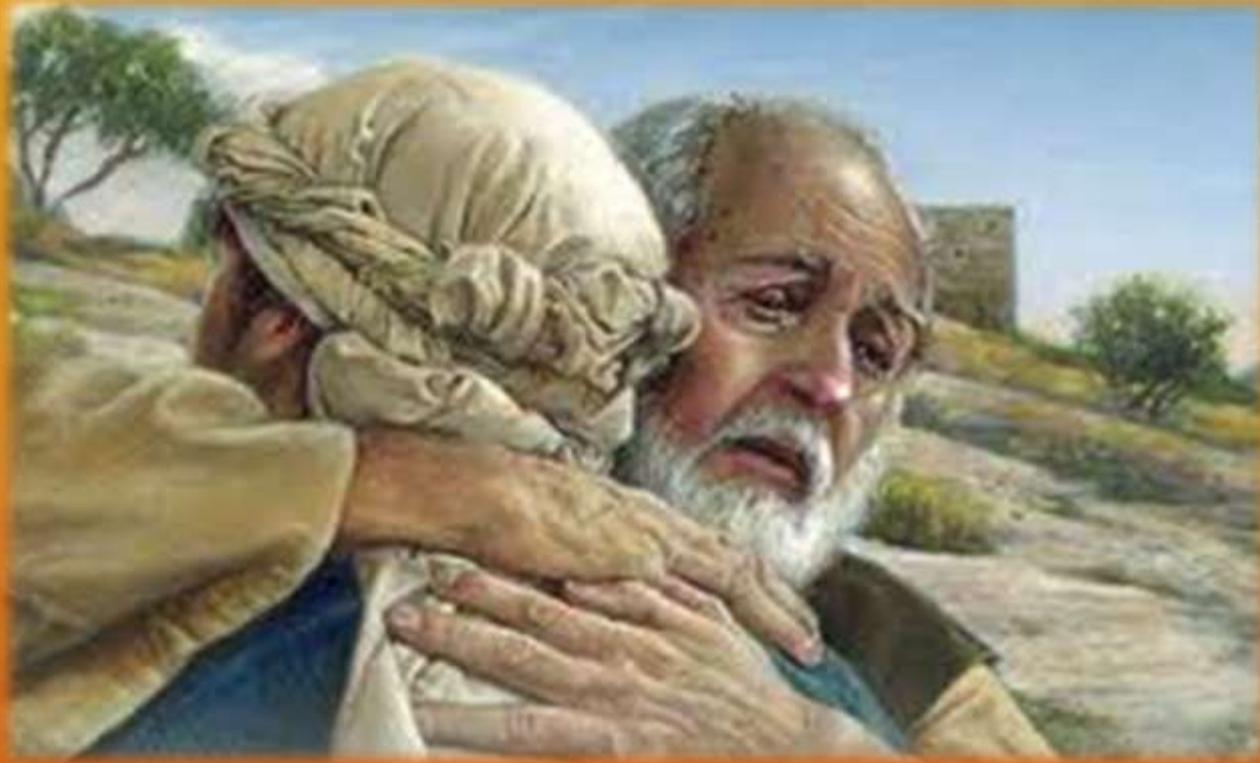
And he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the pigs were eating but no one offered him anything. Then he came to his senses and said:

'How many of my father's paid servants have more food than they want, and here am I dying of hunger!

I will leave this place and go to my father and say: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your paid servants.'



So he left the place and went back to his father



While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity.

He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly.



Then his son said:

'Father I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son.'

But the father called his servants:

'Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

Bring the calf we have been fattening, and kill it; we are going to have a feast, a celebration, because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found.'

And the began to celebrate.

Now the elder son was out in the fields, and on his way back, as he drew near the house, he could hear music and dancing. Calling one of the servants he asked what it was all about.

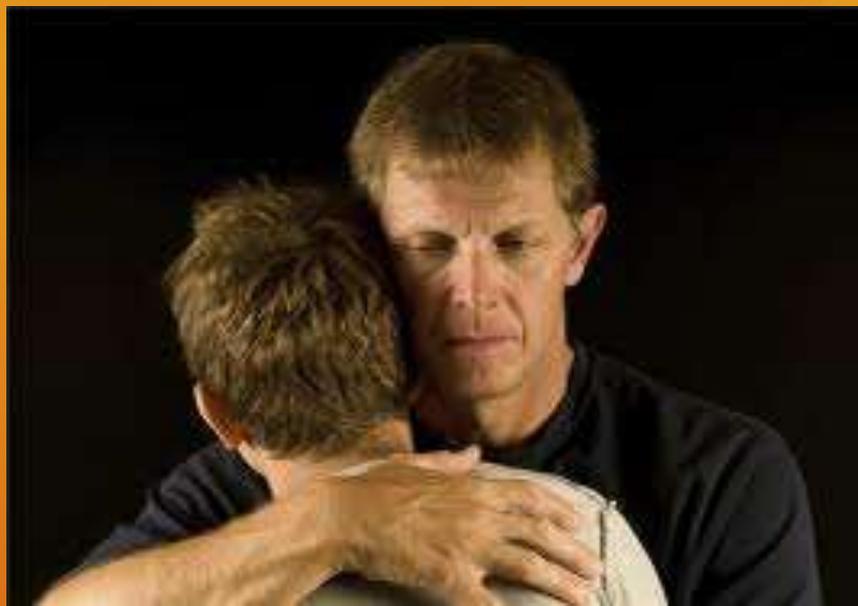
'Your brother has come home,' replied the servant 'and your father has killed the calf we had fattened because he has got him back safe and sound.'

He was angry then and refused to go in, and his father came out to plead with him, but he answered his father:

'Look, in all these years I have slaved for you and never once disobeyed your orders, yet you never offered me as much as a kid for me to celebrate with my friends.'



But for this son of your, when he comes back after swallowing up your property, he and his women, you kill the fatted calf!



The father said:

'My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours.

But it was only right we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life;

he was lost and is found.

The Prodigal Son	ME
His relationship with his Father	I am in relationship with God
A growing selfishness, going away from the Father	I choose to live more selfishly
Living totally selfishly	I sin
Eventual misery because this is not life giving	I realise deep down this is not the way God want me to live
Desire to return to the Father	I want to put things right with God
Sorrow and repentance	I am sorry and want God's forgiveness
Acknowledging sin to the Father	I acknowledge my sin
Acceptance, forgiveness, reconciliation	I listen to words of healing, pardon and peace
Celebration	I thank God and pray my penance
Living as the Father's son	I live as a child of God

REJOICE WITH ME

Before your child makes their first confession you can help them by taking time to read the story of the Prodigal a few times. Take time to reflect on:

- What was going on between the two brothers?
- Which brother would you be?
- When you think about this scripture passage how does it remind of your own family experience?
- Why was the Father so forgiving?
- What is God like with us when we turn back to him?

HAVE LOTS of FAMILY CHATS ABOUT THIS

FINAL REFLECTION

Imagine God is saying this to your family

When you say sorry **I REJOICE**

When you forgive **I REJOICE**

When you tell the truth **I REJOICE**

When you stand up for what is right **I REJOICE**

When you reach out to others in kindness **I REJOICE**

When you love one another **I REJOICE**



I say to you that there shall be joy like this in Heaven
over one sinner who returns home,
more than over ninety nine righteous ones
who do not need a homecoming