

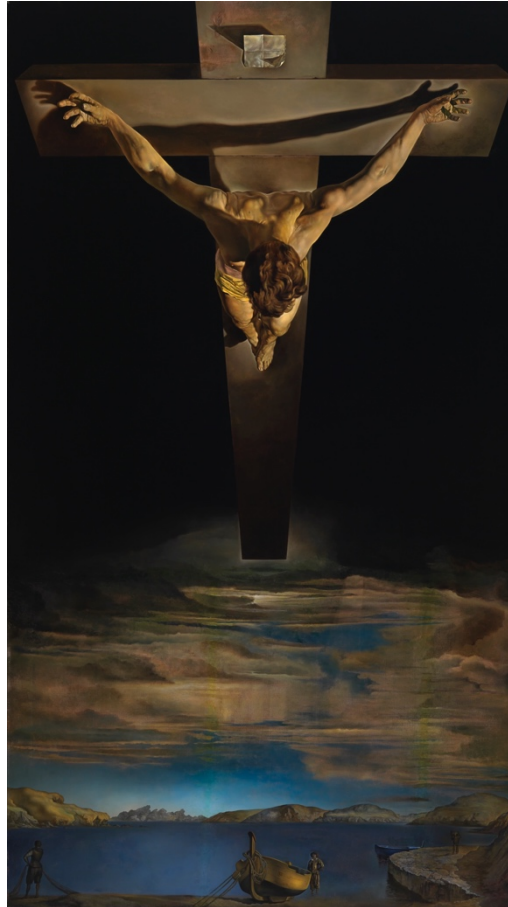


## Words for the Way

An online Lent Course for the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney

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### World Saturday 11 March



*Christ of St John of the Cross by Salvador Dali (Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow)*

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

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” So he told them this parable:

Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and

let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

"Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, '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.'"

Today's word is world, in today's parable (of the Prodigal Son) the younger son goes out to explore the world, does not find it to be all he wished for, wanted or seemed and returns back to his family. He is welcomed back with open arms, like all of us are by God our Creator.

This parable can seem very familiar to us, today you're invited to read it again as each character in the parable – as the Father, as the younger son, as the older son, as family friends, the Mother of the sons – what do you notice as you read the story in each of these person's shoes? What do you notice, are there any new insights into putting yourself in different people's places?

Last Sunday's Gospel reminded us that "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." What does this mean to you today and in the light of reflecting on the Parable of the Prodigal Son?

### ***A Prodigal Son by Christian Rossetti***

Does that lamp still burn in my Father's house,  
Which he kindled the night I went away?  
I turned once beneath the cedar boughs,  
And marked it gleam with a golden ray;  
Did he think to light me home some day?

Hungry here with the crunching swine,  
Hungry harvest have I to reap;  
In a dream I count my Father's kine,  
I hear the tinkling bells of his sheep,  
I watch his lambs that browse and leap.

There is plenty of bread at home,  
His servants have bread enough and to spare;  
The purple wine-fat froths with foam,  
Oil and spices make sweet the air,  
While I perish hungry and bare.

Rich and blessed those servants, rather  
Than I who see not my Father's face!  
I will arise and go to my Father:--  
"Fallen from sonship, beggared of grace,  
Grant me, Father, a servant's place."



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The word for each day is taken from Trevor Hudson's *40 words for 40 days Pauses for Lent*.