

2019.03.31 Homily by Fr. Gabor

Today before I start my homily unusually I would like to ask you to recall from your memories an occasion when you fell out with your child, but eventually the story ended with reconciliation, and remember particularly how you felt in your heart. I will give you a little time...

Just to share with you my own experience today's parable of the prodigal son reminded me of something that happened several years ago in another parish. One day I received a letter from a parishioner who turned against me because the chasuble she donated to the Church was slightly creased. She left the church for a few months. That really saddened me *and broke my heart*. On the other hand I also remember the *overwhelming deep* joy when people told me that they have been away from church for many years, but now wanted to return. I learnt to appreciate sad experiences as a father, because I realised they taught me about what the heavenly Father also experiences day to day.

If you reflect on today's story not only with your mind, but also with your heart, especially as a parent whose heart has been broken over your child you will realise that through this story Jesus reveals the Father's heart; the kind of heart He has; a broken and healed heart.

In this story the younger son approaches his Father and asks for his inheritance right away, which basically means that for some reason he decided to finish with his Father; he will leave and doesn't want to see him again; basically he tells Him: 'I am now dead to you and you are dead to me', end of story, I don't need you anymore. This is when the Father's heart broke for the first time. What's going on: the son chooses money over his Father's love. As a parent you would know exactly what Jesus is telling you if you were the parent of a child who would tell you that he/she doesn't want to see you anymore, but wants to live his/her selfish life alone.

The Father's heart is broken not only because of His son's decision, but also because He knows that His son will suffer as a consequence of His decision, and yet He cannot do anything; He cannot stop him, *and exactly that's how the story evolves*. I am sure you can remember such situations in your family. *But how often do we also prefer the pursuit of materials out of fear of existential insecurity or achievements or doing many things, because of the fear of wasting time, instead of prioritising towards the development and nurturing of our heart to heart relationships with our heavenly Father and those who are the most important people in our lives.*

However, when his son returns the Father is not angry, which is obvious, because he hugs his son without him saying a word of apology, because He can read his body language; and because he sees His son whose heart is broken. The one who loves doesn't need words from the beloved, when things are so obvious. Then after the son's sorrow and apology the Father arranges a big celebration. His heart is full of joy; His heart is healed, He rejoices and wants everyone to rejoice with him, because His dead son has come back to life; but sadly his joy is cut short, because when he faces his older son he refuses to go in to celebrate with Him. The Father's heart is broken again, ~~but this time over the older son.~~ This is what we as parents would feel when you see your parishioners or sons and daughters fall out with each other or refuse to welcome each other, or ignore each other or relate to each other as if they were enemies.

Today Jesus wants us to know and remember that our heavenly Father loves us with a parent's heart, and by our sins we can break His heart, but His heart is easily healed when we come back to Him and to one another with all our hearts. Since He has a heart He wants us to change from cerebral, repetitive worshippers into people who love and worship Him from the heart; people who put our hearts into what we do or say to Him. He also wants us to put our hearts into our relationship with one another, because how can you love God deeply whom you cannot see, while you don't love the one whom you can see (cf. 1 John 4:20)!