

In today's Gospel Reading, Luke 15:11-32, we read the parable about the Prodigal Son. It is in this parable that a son leaves the father's home taking his inheritance. He then squanders it, and becoming destitute, returns asking for forgiveness, to be accepted not as a son, for he felt unworthy, but as a servant. The father welcomes the son, forgives him, and with love and compassion once again restores to him his inheritance with joy for what was lost, was found.

Dearest ones, as we come closer to Great Lent moving towards Great and Holy Pascha, we have a parable about the turning away from sin, repentance, and turning back towards God! When the Prodigal Son sinned—missing the mark—he came to himself and moving away from what he had done, asked his father for forgiveness, and was restored fully!

All of us within our lives have missed the mark; however, there is no sting of this because through our repentance and turning back to God, we can be restored. This restoration in essence is a complete change in us, recognizing our shortcomings, and praying we never repeat the same mistakes again.

Doesn't this make us all like the Prodigal Son, falling away from God at times in our lives? Let us remember that through Christ Jesus we are saved sinners, and therefore, let us not despair, but with a sincere heart say to God, "I have sinned against heaven and before you..." Through the Sacrament of Confession, my dearest ones, we can be restored! It is through this sacrament that our sins are forgiven, and our relationship to God and to others becomes restored and strengthened so that we may then praise Him in the Highest; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever, amen.