

WHAT WE FOUND

We found the horizon of the banquet parables of these chapters in Isaiah 25:6–8: the feast on the mountain for all peoples where God swallows up death forever, which is why the guest list Jesus commands runs to the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, those who cannot repay, and why the parable's excuses are tragedies. We decoded hate father and mother as Semitic comparative idiom (Gen 29:30–31; Mal 1:2–3; Mt 10:37: loves more than me) without domesticating the demand: Christ claims first place in every love, costed in advance.

Then the fifteenth chapter. The shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine; the woman who ransacks the house for a coin stamped with an image; and the father who saw him while he was still a long way off, ran (an elder's indignity, gladly paid), and smothered the rehearsed speech in an embrace: robe, ring, shoes, feast, for this my son was dead, and is alive again. The Catechism reads that arc as the very shape of conversion and repentance (CCC 1439), the movement the sacrament of Confession takes up and completes. And we gave the elder brother his full evening: the slave's verb, the ledger, this son of yours, and a father who came out to entreat him too. The door is still open; the story ends with us.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Peter Chrysologus (*Sermons on the Prodigal Son*)

It is not the manner of age to run, yet love outstrips dignity: the father falls on his son's neck so that the rehearsed speech is smothered in the embrace, and the kiss restores what the confession had not finished asking.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Gregory the Great (*Forty Gospel Homilies, Homily 34*)

The shepherd carrying the sheep on his shoulders is Christ carrying our nature home; the coin is man himself, stamped with the image of his King, sought by lamplight because what is lost still bears the likeness of its owner.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Ambrose of Milan (*Exposition of Luke, Book VII*)

The father sees him afar off because God sees the penitent before the penitent sees God, and runs because grace moves faster than repentance. The robe is Adam's garment restored, the ring the Spirit's seal, and the calf is rich with the mystery of the Eucharist.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- Go to Confession this week with CCC 1439 as your frame: far country, coming to yourself, the walk home, the words, the robe.
- Invite someone who cannot repay you: a meal, a coffee, a seat at your table.
- If you have an estranged relationship, watch the road this week: one text, one call, one door left open.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Luke 15:10 *Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*
(RSV2CE)

Before next session: read Luke 16:1–17:37, a shrewd steward, a rich man and a beggar, ten lepers, and a question about the nine.

Catechism this week: CCC 1439, 545, 1443, 2839.