



Father Danny Murphy is a retired Pastor from Brooklyn NY. A gifted man with a God given talent to inspire and God's gift to us at Holy Cross Church in Vero Beach Florida. This is just one of his inspirational homilies.

## Fr. Danny Murphy – Fourth Sunday of Lent – 2019

Here's a question to which very few of us know the answer: who wrote the words, who wrote the music to the song, Take me out to the Ball game? Here's the answer: the words – Jack Norworth; the music – Albert Von Tilzer. It was composed in 1908. The reason I mention this to you is not only because this week was the opening of the Baseball season, but also, I bet you that Jack Norworth and Albert Von Tizler had no idea how popular their song would become. Even after over a hundred years, it's still sung regularly at ball games and no one can sing it without smiling! The lesson for us – you never know the impact you can make, even if anonymously! Back in the day, I used to teach religion to high school seniors. One day, one of my students told me that her class was reading a Shakespeare play and much to her surprise, she was really enjoying it. Except, she complained, there were so

many trite sayings, such as "Every Dog has its Day," and so on. Of course, what that student didn't know was that Shakespeare was the originator of those sayings; he wasn't the one who made them trite! Well, we could have the same problem with today's parable. We have heard it so often, that it could become trite. Wow, what a story. Charles Dickens says that this is the most touching story in all of literature. Its message is multifaceted, but the bottom line is that it shows us God's infinite mercy. No matter what we've done, no matter how far we've run, God forgives us. The parable of the Prodigal Son shows us that God's mercy is excessive, it's reckless, it's foolish, it's irrational. You cannot escape it! No matter what the son did, he was still his father's beloved son. The same is true for us – each of us is God's beloved child; always was, always will be, no matter what. Because that's who God is. Now, let's take a little closer look at the story to see just how incredibly merciful God is. After the father sees his son coming, he runs out to him, not only to welcome him home, but also to protect him from a severe beating that he may well have been given in payment for what he had done. The son certainly didn't deserve that act of mercy. By putting a robe on him, his father restored to him his sonship; an act of mercy that his son certainly did not deserve. A ring was a sign of authority in a family, so the father restored that authority – that place in the family to his son; an act of mercy that the son didn't deserve. Being barefoot was meant for slaves, sandals gave you freedom. The father knew that the son could use those sandals to go away again; so it was another act of mercy that the son certainly did not deserve. By demanding an early distribution of his inheritance was

tantamount to saying to his father I WISH YOU WERE DEAD. Yet, his father embraced him and kissed him. Wow, that's who God is! Sometimes, we might be trapped into having other images of who God is, inaccurate, unhealthy images. Perhaps these might have been given by parents, teachers, priests. The parable of the Prodigal Son gives the image of who God really is, so let's discard the images of God that come from our mind and instead embrace the image of God that comes to us from the mind of Jesus. Let's obey the first commandment: "I am the Lord your God, you shall not have strange gods before me."

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Some background on the song:

## History of the song (Wikipedia)

Jack Norworth, while riding a subway train, was inspired by a sign that said "Baseball Today – Polo Grounds". In the song, Katie's beau calls to ask her out to see a show. She accepts the date, but only if her date will take her out to the baseball game. The words were set to music by Albert Von Tilzer. (Norworth and Von Tilzer finally saw their first Major League Baseball games 32 and 20 years later, respectively.) The song was first sung by Norworth's then-wife Nora Bayes and popularized by many other vaudeville acts. It was played at a ballpark for the first known time in 1934, at a high-school game in Los Angeles; it was played later that year during the fourth game of the 1934 World Series.<sup>[2]</sup>

Norworth wrote an alternative version of the song in 1927. (Norworth and Bayes were famous for writing and performing such hits as "Shine On, Harvest Moon".)<sup>[3][4]</sup> With the sale of so many records, sheet music, and piano rolls, the song became one of the most popular hits of 1908. The Haydn Quartet singing group, led by popular tenor Harry MacDonough, recorded a successful version on Victor Records.<sup>[5]</sup>

The most famous recording of the song was credited to "Billy Murray and the Haydn Quartet", even though Murray did not sing on it.<sup>[6]</sup> The confusion, nonetheless, is so pervasive that, when "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" was selected by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Recording Industry Association of America as one of the 365 top "Songs of the Century", the song was credited to Billy Murray, implying his recording of it as having received the most votes among songs from the first decade.<sup>[7]</sup> The first recorded version was by Edward Meeker. Meeker's recording was selected by the Library of Congress as a 2010 addition

to the National Recording Registry, which selects recordings annually that are "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant".<sup>[8]</sup>