



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 – 4th Sunday of Lent –03-06-16

Gospel: the Prodigal Son (Lk 15: 1-3;11-32)

What a story! Charles Dickens said that this story is the most touching in all of literature. It is the most powerful and most popular parable. So! What can we do for a follow-up? I think it best to simply tell two other prodigal son – like stories. Here is the first one. A woman that I knew gave birth to twins when her next youngest child was entering High School. She was extremely happy over their birth and doted over her two boys. But as they began to grow older, the bubble began to burst. Eventually, every teacher prayed that they wouldn't be in his/her class because both boys were horrible. They would fight with each other, never study, often in detention. By the sixth grade they were smoking and by the 8th grade they were drinking! Eventually the pastor and the school principal met with the

mother. They begged her to send the boys to a strict boarding school. She replied that she could never do it because she loved them so much. No matter what they have done, they are still my sons. In the story of the prodigal son, each of us are sons or daughters of God no matter what. The father in the Gospel reminds us of God whose love is prodigal, lavish and everlasting. His mercy is relentless. He is like the woman who swept her home in search of the lost coin or the shepherd who leaves the 99 sheep in search of the one who is lost. Jesus came to show us who God is and the God that Jesus came to show us is the father in this Gospel story. In the parable we see God not from our perspective but from the perspective of Jesus. When I was young I tried to follow the first Commandment: I am the Lord your God – you shall have no other false Gods before me. As I grew older I began to recognize a challenge: to pray to a God whom JESUS revealed rather than to a God I fashioned in MY image. The second story revolves around Tony – a parish youth minister. After an evening of activities with the youth of his parish, a very tired Tony goes to a local diner late in the evening. In comes three men: very loud, very dirty and very drunk. They order dinner and one says to the other two: “You know that tomorrow is my birthday”. To which the other two respond: “Big deal! So what! Who cares?!” The owner of the diner came over and apologized to Tony. He told him that all three had sad jobs and often went to a local bar to get drunk before coming to his place for dinner. Tony had an idea and asked the owner of the diner if he paid for it, could he and the youth of his church throw a birthday for the man on the next night. The owner agreed and Tony’s youth group came

and decorated the diner and someone baked him a birthday cake. Everyone waited and sure enough, at 2am the three men came in: loud, dirty and drunk as usual. The teens began to sing Happy Birthday and gave the man his cake. The man stares at the cake for several moments in silence and then asks: "Can I take this home with me? It has been so long since anyone has given me a birthday cake?" What kind of church do we belong to? The kind of church that throws parties for bums at 2 in the morning!! We also belong to a church that celebrates the story of the Prodigal Son!