

**T**he generous attitude of Jesus to ‘tax collectors and sinners’ scandalised those who saw themselves as the guardians of Israel’s true traditions. Luke gives us three parables with which Jesus responded directly to this criticism – he was, he said, giving expression to the merciful ways of his Father. The best know of the three, of course, is the story of the son who, after foolishly squandering his inheritance, is received back by his rejoicing father.

When we recognise how this elaborate story fits into the message that was central to Jesus teaching, we understand that it conveys far more than the brief parables before it. The story hinges on the relationship between the lost son and his father. The real shortcoming of the son, as the story shows, was not his prodigality, but the fact that, though he has lived with his father all his years, he had not had the generosity of spirit that would bring him to understand the love his father had for him. Even when he comes to his senses, his attitude is that of a mercenary – though he has lost the rights of a son, his father is a good man, he will give him a place among his slaves. Jesus saw his immediate mission as calling the nation to identify with the ways of the God of the covenant. Their situation is like that of the prodigal; they have lived for centuries in covenant with God; and they have found themselves in exile for their infidelities; but even after their return they are far from appreciating the ways of the God of the covenant, and the loving designs God has for them. The elder brother in the story - whose relationship to his father, and his claim on his father, is established by his ‘obeying the orders’ he has received – also has the outlook of a mercenary. It is clear that he stands for the leaders who should have led God’s people to an understanding of God’s loving and generous ways, but have persuaded themselves that they show their faithfulness to the covenant by an exact observance of the requirements of the Law. Jesus is calling God’s people to learn at last the clear message of the covenant experience, the loving, merciful and inclusive ways in the heart of his Father.

The words of the father in the story, to the sulking elder brother, are filled with the pathos of Jesus’ appeal: ‘My son, you are with me always and all I have is yours’. The ‘best robe’, the ‘ring’, the ‘sandals’ and the ‘feast’, all marks of special regard, point to a mercy and generosity that have no limits. We are left to imagine the aftermath. Surely, the son’s life is transformed, as he comes, at last, to share in the love in the heart of his father. The future the Saviour promises to the world, in fact, will be a sharing in the love of his Father (cf. John 14:25 etc).

*John Thornhill sm*

PARISH

**Scripture Classes**

We resume on Wednesday, Sept. 18, 10am in the downstairs meeting room and on Thursday, Sept. 19, 7pm at OLS School, 32 Montgomery Rd., room 315. Our topic is the Gospel according to St. John, ch. 13 to 21. All are welcome. Please bring your Bible!

**Music Notes – September, 2013**

**Choirs:** Our parish is well known for its enduring and high-quality music program, made possible through the participation of over 100 people singing in five choirs! One of these groups may benefit from the contribution of you or your children. Please contact Gordon Mansell, our Music Director, through the Parish Office to see where you and your family might best serve your parish.

**Ecumenical Choir:** The Ecumenical choir, one of our five parish choirs, is the only one of its kind in our diocese. This touring and concert choral group is comprised of people from a variety of parishes and community churches. Earlier this year the choir successfully toured Italy, performing public concerts or liturgies in Florence, Assisi, Rome, and at the Vatican. The group sang twice as principal choir for Masses at St. Peter’s Basilica, including the Candlemas liturgy, one of Pope Benedict’s final public masses. Currently, the choir is preparing for its second European tour, planned for Prague and Vienna in 2015. If you are an experienced singer, please consider contacting Gordon for more information.

**Accompanist needed:** We are looking for an accompanist to help Michele during her Thursday afternoon rehearsals (Youth Choir; 4–5pm, Chamber Choir; 5–6pm) and every other Sunday for the 9:30am Mass. If you have piano skills and a little time to share with a great group of children, please contact Michele or Gordon through the Parish Office.

**Mass Intentions This Week – Sept. 16 to 22**

Please join us as we pray for the following “Announced Mass” intentions:

	Intention(s)	Offered by
Monday, 9am	✠ Elizabeth Breslin	Jimmy Magee
Tuesday, 9am	✠ Anthony & Mary Grimaldi	Joseph Grimaldi
Wednesday, 9am	✠ Bob Finley	Tom & Lee Inglis
Thursday, 9am	✠ Madeline Nivet	Jim & Winnie Magee
Friday, 9am	✠ Douglas Foss	Jim & Winnie Magee
Saturday, 9am	✠ Elizabeth Cochrane	The Di Paolo Family
5:15pm	...our Parish and Parishioners	
Sunday, 8am	✠ Cecilia Bernal	The Family
9:30am	✠ Jack Marchand	The Marchand Family
11am	✠ Leon Bacardi	Friends
12:30pm	✠ Thaddeus Wisniewski	The Family

CONGRATULATIONS TO **FR. MATTHEW FURGIUELE** WHO PRESIDED OVER HIS SOLEMN FIRST MASS TODAY. WE OFFER PRAYERS OF THANKS FOR HIS VOCATION.

COMMUNITY

**Support for Recently Separated/Divorced Catholics**

Catholic Family Services of Toronto is offering a 10 week group program for adult men and women coping with the many struggles involved in the process of separation and divorce. Group participants will receive support and guidance as they move through this difficult period of transition. The group will run on Tuesday evenings from 6:30–8:30pm beginning Sept. 24 at our Central Office, 1155 Yonge St. (Summerhill Subway Station). For information, contact Ian Singer at 416-921-1163.

**Breakfast With Terry Barber – Saturday Sept. 29, 9:30am**

Tongue-tied when a Protestant questions and challenges the faith? Ever been at a loss when speaking with atheists about your Catholic Faith? Don’t know what to say when a family member criticizes Church teaching? Terry Barber, co-founder of Lighthouse Catholic Media, founder of St. Joseph Communication and co-host with on Mother Angelica’s EWTN Radio Network will be speaking at St. Francis Xavier Church on Witnessing in Today’s Culture. Tickets \$15. Preceded by Mass beginning at 9am. Call 905-568-8777 or e-mail [liz.rybka@lighthousecatholicmedia.org](mailto:liz.rybka@lighthousecatholicmedia.org)

**Knowing More About Our Faith...**

**TEN DATES EVERY CATHOLIC SHOULD KNOW: A SEMINAR IN CHURCH HISTORY**

Based on the book by Diane Moczar, this series of ten seminars will consider ten important dates in their historical context and significance for the Church and the world. Two seminar times available on Wednesdays: 1pm and 7pm, Sept. 25 to Nov. 27 at St. Mary Immaculate Church, Richmond Hill, in the Parish Hall. \$20 per person. To register, please call the Parish Office at 905-884-1784.

**Introducing Merrymakers, A Dynamic Program For Kids**

Mary, Mother of God School is now registering children for 2½ hours of enriched programs on Monday and Thursday afternoons, 1–3:30 p.m. Join us for songs, stories, poems, nursery rhymes, instruments, games, classical music, drama and lots of play. For more information, call the School Office at 416-531-7897. Come and make merry with us! Visit us at [www.marymotherofgodschool.org](http://www.marymotherofgodschool.org)

**Recently on Twitter...**

- Pope Francis** @Pontifex 10 Sep  
The only war that we must all fight is the one against evil #prayforpeace
- Pope Francis** @Pontifex 10 Sep  
I thank everyone who participated in the prayer vigil and the fast for peace. #prayforpeace
- Pope Francis** @Pontifex 9 Sep  
Humanity needs to see these gestures of peace and to hear words of hope and peace! #prayforpeace