

CHAPTER 8 PRAYER SERVICE

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reader: A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

Then he said, “A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.’ So the father divided the property between them.

After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any.

Coming to his senses he thought, ‘How many of my father’s hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.”’

So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.’

But his father ordered his servants, ‘Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.’ Then the celebration began.

Now the older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, ‘Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, ‘Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on

with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.’

He said to him, ‘My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’”

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: Heavenly Father, we come before you today aware of our sinfulness but trusting in your boundless mercy. Let us now take a few moments of silence to call to mind the times that we have chosen to do what is wrong or failed to do what is good.

Pause for a few minutes of silent reflection.

Leader: Let us pray.

All: I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done,
and in what I have failed to do;
through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Listen to the Kyrie Eleison as a traditional Gregorian chant. Several versions are available for free on YouTube.

Leader: Let us now turn to our Heavenly Father, entrusting ourselves to his love and mercy.

All: Our Father . . .

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.