



*Drawing by John R Hume,
courtesy of Scotland's Churches Trust*

St Mary Magdalene's Church

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Monsignor Charles Hendry - Parish Priest

4th Sunday of Lent, Year C, 6th March 2016

The Forgiving Father

The parable Jesus tells in today's Gospel is unique to the Gospel of Luke. Jesus has been teaching the crowds as he journeys to Jerusalem. As he teaches, the Pharisees and scribes complain and challenge Jesus because he is welcoming sinners at his table. Today we hear the third of three parables that Jesus tells in response to his critics. These three familiar parables—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and today's parable of the prodigal son—invite us to consider the depth of God's mercy and love.

The Pharisees taught a scrupulous observance of Jewish Law. In their interpretation and practice, observant Jews who shared table fellowship with sinners would be made unclean. Like Jesus, the Pharisees hoped to lead sinners back to God. The Pharisees, however, required that sinners first become ritually clean—observant of the Pharisees' interpretation of Jewish Law—before sharing table fellowship. This appears to be one of the major differences between the Pharisees and Jesus. Jesus reaches out to sinners while they are still sinners, inviting them to conversion through fellowship with him. Jesus is God acting among us; by befriending us, he is inviting us to return to friendship with God. Through friendship with Jesus, our sins are forgiven and



The younger son takes his inheritance and leaves home. The older son remains, continuing to provide for the father and the household. Having been disgraced by the younger son, the father spends some time watching the road for the return of the lost son. When he eventually sees his wayward son returning, the father not only welcomes him but also runs out to greet him and then honors him with a party. We say that this father is loving and forgiving. Yet these adjectives only begin to describe the depth of love and mercy that characterise the father.

We find no surprise in the anger of the older son. Yet the father appears sad and even confused by the older son's indignation. He says in reply that they should celebrate because the lost son had returned. The father is filled with gratitude and love for the older son's faithfulness. This love is in no way diminished by the father's rejoicing at the return of the younger son. Yet the older son's jealousy reveals his limited understanding of the depth of his father's love.

we, in turn, bear fruit for God. Recall last Sunday's Gospel and the barren fig tree.

Our familiarity with today's parable risks dulling us to its tremendously powerful message. We call this the parable of the lost son or the prodigal son. Any focus on the younger son, however, must also be balanced by an examination of the unusual behavior of the father.

First we must imagine our first response to the audacity of a son who asks for his inheritance before his father has died. Indignation would certainly be a justifiable response to such a request. Yet the father in this parable agrees to honour the son's request and divides his property among his two sons. How might we describe such a father? Foolish comes to mind, but so does trusting. Without property of his own, the father must rely upon his sons to provide for his well-being.

For today's Mass

Responsorial Psalm

Taste and see
that the Lord is good.

Gospel Acclamation

I will leave this place
and go to my father and say:
'Father, I have sinned
against heaven and against you'.

Stations of the Cross

every Monday
during Lent at 6.30pm

preceded by
**Exposition of the
Blessed
Sacrament**

for those who wish to pray
from 5.30pm - 6.30pm
in St John's

AROUND PERTH

**Sunday Mass in
St Mary Magdalene's, Craigie**
10am - Sunday
8am - Weekdays
(except Wednesday)
7am - Wednesday

**Sunday Mass in
Our Lady of Lourdes, Letham**
5.30pm (vigil); 11am

**Sunday Mass in
St Mary's, Kinnoull**
10am

Sunday Mass in St John's
6.30pm (vigil); 9am; 11am & 6.30pm

PRAYERS

Please pray for the repose of
the souls of Audrey Hampton,
Joe Cronin and Louise Zanre
and all the faithful departed.

**Eternal rest grant
unto their souls, O Lord.
May they rest in peace. Amen.**

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

**Sundays at 3pm
in St Mary Magdalene's
during Lent**

FEAST DAYS

Monday 7th March
Ss Perpetua and Felicity,
Martyrs

Tuesday 8th March
St Frances of Rome,
Religious

Mothers around the world are struggling to provide for their families and to give their children a better chance in life. Please give what you can to today's special collection and remember mothers everywhere in your prayers.

SCIAF SUNDAY

Collection

Thank you for your generosity - last Sunday's collection amounted to £219.40.

Special collection

A special collection will be taken this Sunday in aid of the Papal and Episcopal Charities - including the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund..

SCIAF Boxes

SCIAF boxes are available in the Church porch for your Lenten Almsgiving - please return them at Mass on Holy Thursday.

Italian Association

During Lent - Stations of the Cross will be followed, in Italian, at 2pm on Saturdays in St John's.

Italian Classes

Italian classes in hall every Saturday from 4.15-6.15pm except for the last Saturday of the month. Open to all - beginners and fluent speakers.

Italian Association

The next meeting of the Italian Association will be on **Saturday 19th March** (as the usual date would have been Holy Saturday).

Meeting at 1pm followed by Mass in Italian at 2pm.



Lourdes 2016

Dunkeld Diocesan 2016 Pilgrimage to Lourdes led by Bishop Stephen Robson on 8th - 15th July, by air from Edinburgh. For further information see notice at back of the Church.

**During Lent
our Saturday
Weekday
Mass will be
celebrated
at 10am**

ARE YOU GOING TO BE IN HOSPITAL? DO YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO IS IN HOSPITAL?

Name _____ Hospital _____ Ward _____

Please complete/ tear off and hand it to Mgr Hendry after Mass