

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT



Joshua 5:9-12 | 1 Cor 5:17-21 | Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

One of the most beautiful expressions in the Bible comes from the prophet Ezekiel. 'Thus says the Lord, I will take their hearts of stone and give them hearts of flesh.' It is a call to be tender and compassionate.

You would need a heart of stone not to be affected by the stories we encounter today. Most of us have heard the story of the two sons in today's Gospel over and over. The brilliance of the way Jesus tells stories is that it still gets under our skin. Here are two young men who think they can live on their own terms. One has a sense of entitlement and demands his share of his father's estate which he then squanders. He is finally prepared to eat humble pie and find his way home. The other son has a different sense of entitlement. He believes that his hard work and reliability should provide him with a greater share of his father's love. At different times in our life, we can relate more to one or other of these people. Jesus implies that they are both blind to the way God's love works and that they both need to grow. They have both been dead and need to come to life.

The story we encounter this week through Caritas Australia's Project Compassion is also deeply moving. Rosalie, aged 37, lives in one of the most damaged countries in the world, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). From the age of fifteen, she was forced to become a child soldier, exposed to violence and heartbreak. She actually says that she was forced into combat with a baby on her back. Now she has seven children and dreams of a better future for them. Thanks to your support of Project Compassion, she has been able to start a small business, save so her children might go to school and become an inspiration to others. Recovery from the trauma of war affects people around the world.

Our second reading today reminds us that we are 'ambassadors for Christ.' St Paul says, 'for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation.' Let us all be part of building that new creation, setting the world to rights as best we can. God wants to reconcile the world to himself. Our part in this is to reach out in compassion and love to heal the wounds of the whole human family. The theme of Project Compassion this year asks us to think and act 'for all future generations.' Our hearts need to be warm and strong.