

March 30, 2025

# Daily Reflections

*Journeying through Lent*



Center for Spiritual Development

## THE RADICAL NATURE OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

By Robert Choiniere

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### An Excerpt from Today's Gospel

*"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."*

**LUKE 15:31-32**

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### Reflection

Today's well-known parable of the Prodigal Son reveals the radical nature of God's primary job description. As St. Paul says even more plainly than the parable, God reconciles. God heals brokenness, God restores relationships and never counts the cost. God is not an exacting punisher, a strict disciplinarian, a

scrupulous accountant of sin or a vengeful authoritarian seeking retribution. God makes all things new. God gets to the heart of things and dismisses all the failures, betrayals, mistakes and shortfalls that keep us disconnected, ashamed, hopeless or despairing. God looks past everything that gets in the way; every single barrier that blocks us from the love of God, God removes.

The Prodigal Son cannot imagine such love, so unconditional and overwhelming that he does not even need to make excuses or offer apology or do anything to merit the love of his Father. The Father's love in this parable knows no bounds; it is not transactional, it does not demand that the son jump through any hoops, make a good confession or complete any penitential act to earn back what was lost. In fact, the son never loses the love of his Father at any point in the story. This is the radical nature of unconditional love. We don't earn God's love -- it is forever freely given no matter how many mistakes we make; even if we are convinced otherwise, God never stops loving us fully and forever.

St. Paul takes this reconciling love a step further, calling all of us who claim to be disciples to demonstrate this same radical love to everyone we meet. St. Paul says that we are ambassadors of this reconciling love. As St. Theresa of Avila once said, "God has no other hands on Earth now but yours." One important way the world comes to know this love is through the example of those who claim to follow this God. We are called to be agents of a love that knows no bounds, that loves past every barrier, that loves without distinction, even loving those who seem the most unlovable and, in the eyes of the world, undeserving of being loved. This radical love is at the heart of the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange – to be agents of unity and reconciliation. It is a love we are called to extend to all we meet; but to do that we must first believe and know this love ourselves.

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## For Pondering

- What barriers have you placed between yourself and the love of God?
  - How have you experienced the unconditional love of God?
  - What boundaries do you put on your love?
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## For Prayer

*Loving God,  
you have reconciled us in Christ Jesus  
and have given us the ministry of reconciliation.  
We pray for all those from whom we are estranged.  
Bring healing to strained or broken relationships.  
Forgive us for the times we have wronged others,  
whether by ignorance, neglect, or intention.  
Grant us the courage and the grace to seek their forgiveness  
and opportunity to make amends.  
Where others have wronged us,  
grant us a gracious spirit,  
that we might forgive*



*even as we have been forgiven in Jesus Christ.  
Amen.*

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