

SEPTEMBER 11, 2016



# TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



EXODUS 32:7-11, 13-14

PSALM 51:3-4, 12-13, 17, 19

1 TM 1:12-17

LUKE 15:1-32 OR 15:1-10

## REFLECTION

Did you know that we are currently celebrating something truly magnificent in the life of the Catholic Church? During Lent of 2015, Pope Francis announced that he was calling a special year, a Year of Mercy, to run from December 8, 2015, until November 20, 2016. The theme for this year is "Merciful like the Father" (see Luke 6:36). Today's Gospel reading contains three separate parables, all of which contain an element of mercy within them. The third of these, the story of the prodigal son, paints a vivid picture of the Father's loving mercy and unconditional love. It is a story you know well. The younger son asks for his inheritance (of which he was actually entitled to none), and the father grants his request. The son goes off and squanders all the money and decides to return to the father; note that the son decides to return due to hunger and not because he is seeking forgiveness. He does acknowledge his sin, but he doesn't actually seek forgiveness. He was literally starving. Often, this story is portrayed as one about repentance. In reality, it is more so about the incomprehensibility of the love, mercy, and mystery of God.



"WHEN MERCY  
FOUND ME"

**RHETT WALKER  
BAND**

## ACTION

Pause for a moment and think about who it is in your life that needs mercy. Who needs some unconditional love from you at this moment in time? Reach out to that person. Join them on their journey. If there was something that they did that wronged you, seek your innermost being to find some mercy for them and reach out to them in forgiveness and love. A little more than two months remain in the Church's Year of Mercy. Use this time to consciously become an agent for mercy and love in your communities: within your family, your school, your work, your circle of friends, the local community that surrounds you, and perhaps a community that may seem foreign or different to you. Take a chance and step out in mercy!

## JOURNALING QUESTIONS

- Reread the Gospel reading for today. Pay particular attention to a different character in the story about the lost son. See if you can situate yourself in each of their places in the parable. In your journal, spend some time writing about your thoughts and reflections from each of their perspectives. How do you feel? What are your thoughts about each of the other characters in the story?