



Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

[Home](#) - [Saint Josemaria](#) - [Talking to God](#) - The Prodigal Son

The Prodigal Son

2003.6.3

But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

But the father said to his servants, "Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." And they began to make merry (Lk 15:20-24).

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and took pity on him; running up, he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. That's what the sacred text says: he covered him with kisses. Can you put it more humanly than that? Can you describe more graphically the paternal love of God for men?

When God runs toward us, we cannot keep silent, but with Saint Paul we exclaim: *Abba, Pater. Father, my Father!*, for, though he is the creator of the universe, he doesn't mind our not using high-sounding titles, nor worry about our not acknowledging his greatness. He wants us to call him Father; he wants us to savor that word, our souls filling with joy.

Human life is in some way a constant returning to our Father's house. We return through contrition, through the conversion of heart which means a desire to change, a firm decision to improve our life and which, therefore, is expressed in sacrifice and self-giving. We return to our Father's house by means of that sacrament of pardon in which, by confessing our sins, we put on Jesus Christ again and become his brothers, members of God's family.

God is waiting for us, like the father in the parable, with open arms, even though we don't deserve it. It doesn't matter how great our debt is. Just like the prodigal son, all we have to do is open our heart, to be homesick for our Father's house, to wonder at and rejoice in the gift which God makes us of being able to call

ourselves his children, of really being his children, even though our response to him has been so poor.

Christ is Passing By, 64

For a Christian, joy is a treasure. Only by offending God do we lose it, because sin is the fruit of selfishness, and selfishness is the root of sadness. Even then, a bit of joy survives under the debris of our soul: the knowledge that neither God nor his Mother can ever forget us. If we repent, if an act of sorrow springs from our heart, if we purify ourselves in the holy sacrament of penance, God comes out to meet and forgive us. Then there can be no sadness whatsoever. Then there is every right *to rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come back to life, was lost and has been found.* These words are taken from the marvelous ending of the parable of the prodigal son, which we shall never tire of meditating.

Christ is Passing By, 178