

"Son...  
all that is  
**MINE IS YOURS.**"  
LUKE 15:31

## Monthly Reflection:

November 2024

The most enriching story ever told concludes in suspense, leaving us to ponder whether the Father's heartfelt attempts to draw his elder son to the banquet were successful. Perhaps in ending the parable thus, the Son intended for each listener to determine the ending for their own lives. The Master storyteller, in a simple yet sublime way, reveals the Father's heart that yearns to share His very best with His children. Do we listen to the same gentle whisper of the Father in our hearts? "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours."

In some mysterious way, the younger son understood this better. How else could he dare to ask his father for his share of the inheritance? Human frailty is often incapable of receiving such abundant generosity! His sensual and greedy heart took his father's benevolence for granted, wantonly giving in to the desires of his lower nature. How often do we resemble him in treating God's generosity with casualness? Are we not often blind to the price God had to pay to adopt us into His family? Despite God's sheer mercy in elevating us to the divine dignity of being His children, do we not frequently lose sight of this precious inheritance and betray Him for fleeting worldly gains? Yet, the Father patiently waits, with a heart that never tires of forgiving, whispering to us, "All that is mine is yours."

The best robe, a ring, shoes, and the fattened calf—St. Clement of Alexandria explained that the best robe signifies the garment of immortality, the ring represents the royal signet and divine seal of consecration, the shoes are those that do not wear out, prepared for our journey to heaven, and the fattened calf that is slain is Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. All these are ours to be received in simple faith!

But the truth remains veiled from the elder son. He couldn't even begin to grasp the exalted position his brother now held, raised through the father's generosity. Though he lived under the same roof with his father, instead of relishing the abundant grace poured upon him, his mind was clouded by the deceitful whispers of pride. He rejected the feast, the fellowship with his father and brother, and the joy that filled the house. And for what? A young goat that the father had not given him to celebrate with his friends! Was he so unaware that everything that remained was his after his brother was given his share? How poorly he lived, despite dwelling in a house filled with riches.

Yet, do we not find the elder son's attitude lurking within our own hearts? Filled with the awareness of God's generosity, Paul exclaims, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him (Rom 8:32)?" In his extravagance, God made us partakers of his divine nature (2 Pet 1:4) and co-heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17). Are we truly conscious of this dignity bestowed on us gratuitously or do we keep crying over the 'young goats' – the trivial things that we did not receive in the earthly realm?

For most of us, unconditional trust in the Father is difficult. Reflecting on this, Pope Benedict XVI said, "It is not always easy today to talk about fatherhood... Families are broken, the workplace is ever more absorbing, families worry and often struggle to make ends meet and the distracting invasion of the media invades our daily life: these are some of the many factors that can stand in the way of a calm and constructive relationship between father and child. At times communication becomes difficult, trust is lacking and the relationship with the father figure can become problematic; moreover, in this way even imagining God as a father becomes problematic without credible models of reference. It is not easy for those who have experienced an excessively authoritarian and inflexible father or one who was indifferent and lacking in affection, or even absent, to think serenely of God and to entrust themselves to him with confidence."

That is why we need Jesus to reveal to us the perfect Father. When he whispers on the eve of his passion, 'All I have is yours, and all you have is mine', (Jn 17:10), he reveals to us the unconditional trust with which we too can respond to the Father's whisper. Come, let us believe in His words and enter, to enjoy the feast reserved for children.

