

## PASTORAL COUNCIL

### Thoughts For Reflection

March 6, 2016

#### *The Prodigal Son*

Prodigal Son had experienced amnesty, his father would have forgiven him before the boy tried to return. He might even have sent notice inviting him home, saying that all was forgiven.

Divine Mercy, according to the parable, does not work that way. The son has to do three things first: 1) recognize the nature of his condition, 2) repent of his action that led him there, and 3) approach his father as a servant.

*I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."*

Then, Mercy manifests itself. As soon as the father sees his son returning, he rushes out to meet the boy and restores him to full honor within the family, weeping on his shoulder from joy. But notice that the son has had to commit to changing in his life first.

That is why communion for divorced and remarried Catholics is impossible, unless they are first willing to change the way they live. They must recognize that living outside the blessings of the Father is no way to proceed. Yes, God will forgive us for anything, but we cannot be forgiven if we refuse to change.

Pope Francis has designated this as the Year of Mercy. There are extra ways in which we can receive mercy this year, but remember that we are God's adopted children. Because God loves us, He does not want us to make peace with our lusts and desires, because there is no room for any of that in Heaven. He wants us to strive for something much greater. He calls us to live with Him, to live in the true joy of supernatural life.

The Father expresses his joy this way: *"For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."*