

# building hope

Family of Four Parishes Lent 2019

Week 4 Reflection - Lost and Found

“I once was lost and now am found, was blind but now can see.” The words of *Amazing Grace* fill my head as I hear this week’s Gospel story of The Parable of the Lost Son. Like *Amazing Grace*, this parable is one of the most beloved and familiar stories that we hear. All of us can experience a sense of being “lost” or a blindness to God’s love. This parable can help us to identify in our own life our misdeeds and our call to return to our loving and merciful God.

Who is the lost one? In this parable, both brothers are lost and blind in their own way. The younger son is lost because he did the unthinkable - he asked for his portion of his father’s inheritance and then ran off with the money, leaving the father and older son to maintain the family’s business. He squanders all the money partaking in sinful behavior and finds himself destitute and starving. It isn’t until he hits rock bottom when he realizes the weight of his sins against his father and begins his journey home that his life takes a turn for the better. His father welcomes him with open arms and greets him, not with chastisement, but with pure love because “he was dead and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.” (Lk 15:24)

Though it isn’t as obvious, the older son was blind as to his relationship with his father. His life was more socially acceptable and he obediently worked to fulfill his duties as a son. It isn’t until he says to his father, “Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends” (Lk 15:29) that he shows his anger toward his father and jealousy of his younger brother. He doesn’t want to enter into his brother’s party because he sees it as an injustice towards himself. He is blind to see that the father’s love is unlimited and that he had the father’s love all this time. The lesson that the father is teaching him is that love is infinite and that no sin is greater than the love of the father. He should forgive and love others freely and generously - the father’s love has no limit.

Whether we relate to the older brother or younger brother, we are all challenged to be more like the father - to endure suffering with patience, to love others without counting the cost, to be merciful and forgiving. But when we fall short, make mistakes and hurt others - we say “sorry” and God will open his arms to embrace us in his love. Now *that* is *Amazing Grace* - “The Lord hath promised good to me, His word my hope secures; He will my shield and portion be, As long as life endures.”

#### Reflection questions:

Who do I relate to in this story - am I the father, the older son, or the younger son? What is the lesson that I need to learn in my life now?

When was a time in my life when I was freely given a second chance? How did it make me feel and did it change my life and how I treat others?

Is there a person in my life right now who I need to forgive and reconcile with?

Have I recently examined my conscience and taken the opportunity to seek reconciliation with God by going to Confession?

-Anh Clausen, Director of Family Ministry



Milwaukee  
**Habitat**  
for Humanity®

# our affordable housing crisis

**Most renters in Milwaukee are living in unaffordable housing.**

Milwaukee looks very different since we built our first home in 1984. Today, hardworking families are finding it increasingly difficult to afford a place to call home. In Milwaukee, families have watched their incomes stagnate while their housing costs have soared. This has led to alarming eviction rates, leaving families with nowhere to go. Others are priced out of the market to the point where home ownership seems nearly unattainable.

Milwaukee Habitat is here to combat our city's affordable housing crisis by providing families with an affordable path to safe, stable housing. Affordable housing means more than a decent place to sleep at night. Studies show safe, affordable housing leads to improved health, education and financial stability.

Milwaukee Habitat offers a hand up, rather than a hand out as Habitat homeowners help build their own homes and pay an affordable mortgage.

By concentrating our efforts in a targeted area, Milwaukee Habitat is not just helping local families, but revitalizing entire neighborhoods. As we build block by block, we aim to decrease crime, increase community engagement, and create vibrant, sustainable neighborhoods.



## Did you know???

# 60%

of Milwaukee renters are currently living in unaffordable housing paying 40%, 50% and even 70% of their income just to cover the rent. For families living below Milwaukee's median income, often times that means little is left over for education, savings, or even basic needs.

# 16

families are evicted in Milwaukee every single day. This alarming truth is leaving local families with nowhere to go. Affordable home ownership means families gain stability. Many families we work with have encountered rapidly increasing rent and negligible landlords.

# 30%

of African Americans in Milwaukee own their own homes, compared to 70% of Whites. This disparity can, in part, be traced back to systemically biased housing practices most notably brought to light by Milwaukee's Fair Housing Marches of 1967-68.

Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity

3726 N Booth St, Milwaukee, WI 53212 | 414-562-6100 | milwaukeehabitat.org