In today's Gospel, we hear the parable of the prodigal son. This young man toiled in the business of his father, left his comfortable home, and began seeking to fulfill his worldly desires for women, excessive drinking, and other pleasures. When he ran out of money, he came to understand the error of his ways and returned home hoping to take the form of a slave since he had dishonored his father. Little did he know that, upon making this request, his father would have mercy upon him, forgive him for his poor decision, and welcome him into his rightful home. There he worked happily alongside his father in humble admiration for the rest of his days.

Such is the will and pleasure of our heavenly Father, who receives us again and again when we come to him asking for forgiveness. We are all prodigal children and undeserving to be called God's sons and daughters. Yet, that is what we are.

May we imitate the prodigal son of Jesus' parable and return to our Father every time we find ourselves in sin so that we can receive his mercy. Then, we too can work happily alongside Our Lord in humble admiration. Through spiritual endurance in seeking forgiveness we draw closer to Our Lord and discover that we have no reason to ever leave his side.

**For Reflection**

- How is your life like that of the prodigal son?
- Are you as willing to forgive others as the prodigal son's father was to forgive him?
- What does it mean to have spiritual endurance?
God can defeat sin and help us fight temptation

Theodore Roosevelt was once quoted as saying, “Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty.” We see this quote manifested every time we see a sports star hoisting a championship trophy above his head; or, much more appropriately, a missionary washing the hands of the poor children she serves breakfast to; or the mother of young children resting her head on a pillow after a long day of care-giving.

Indeed, the satisfaction of these individuals during these moments is intense, but so is their pain, their tiredness, and their willingness to continue the work the next day.

Such is the way of the determined soul. If those who endure to the end receive prizes in this world, should it not be so for our spirits, too?

Our souls were designed to endure the greatest of all trials — that of sin and its power over us. For humans it is impossible to defeat sin, but with God’s grace we are given the ability to endure temptations and overcome them.

St. Peter tells us, “Although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pt 1:6–7).

So, go. Endure your spiritual trials so that you can win the “unfading crown of glory” (1 Pt 5:4) that awaits you.

Jesus, my savior, you endured the hate of your own people, the suffering in the garden, the scourging at the pillar, the crowning of thorns, the carrying of the cross, crucifixion, and death. Allow me to endure all of life’s difficulties, small or grave, and unite them with your merciful passion. In doing so, may I be made worthy of the promise of your resurrection.