

SATURDAY, MARCH 2

Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

Luke 15:22b



Today's parable is one of Jesus' most famous: the Prodigal Son. There are many ways of reading this story, including as a story about what counts as waste and generosity. Through this lens, this is a story about a younger son who receives his full inheritance and who then wastes it on partying and prostitutes. When he is starving and penniless, he returns to his father who generously offers even more for having returned (a robe, ring, sandals for his feet) and wants to throw a big feast.

The older brother considers his father's generosity to be its own form of squandering. "But when this son of yours came back, who

has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!"

This brings me to a strange and troubling fact about Jesus: he is frequently the advocate for what some have called "promiscuous generosity," that is, generosity without a lot of terms. This is the type of generosity that upsets and scandalizes his disciples. It is a generosity, they contend, offered to too many people—and all the wrong sorts.

Today's readings

Psalm 103:1–4(5–8)9–12

Micah 7:14–15,18–20 | Luke 15:11–32

Are there times when we, like the older brother, find ourselves questioning acts of generosity toward those we deem unworthy? Do we struggle to give without conditions? How might this parable challenge us to expand our understanding of generosity and compassion in our lives?