

## WHAT DIRECTIONS ARE WE GOING? AND WHAT DIRECTION IS GOD GOING?

Whenever we find ourselves running, we must ask a question, are we running towards something, or away from something? In the Gospel, we hear a story we can all tell by heart. The prodigal son resonates deeply with many. It is a parable that invites us to be drawn in by two sons, by jealousy, by conversion, by helplessness and hopelessness. It also challenges us to look at status within a family, sibling rivalry and a sense of belonging. It is a powerful demonstration of Jesus telling us we barely understand the depth of God's love.

For us to internalize this journey, for us to integrate the magnitude of what is revealed, we have to ask ourselves, in what direction are we running? We have to get in touch with what we are sometimes running away from. Fear always quickens the pace. Sin and darkness always want to remain hidden, so we run for cover, shielding our faces so as not to be recognized. Sin causes us to run away. When I did something wrong as a child, I would run and hide underneath the bed. I telegraphed to the whole family, I was or soon would be in trouble. It was my hiding place. Punishment came after I was dragged out by my arms across the floor. While I got what I deserved, I did the running. The direction was away from truth and consequences for my actions.

The father in the parable is one directional. He is always running and moving towards the two sons. Both have disappointed him. Catching sight of the one, he runs towards him. Leaving the party and festivities, he goes out to the other who would not come in. The father finds both right where they are. God is always running towards us, always removing the barriers that keep us from Him. It is an explosive parable revealing the desire of God. Jesus wants us to know we are loved and cherished. Jesus wants us to know the Heavenly Father is patient. He wants us to trust that once the Father catches sight of us, He will always seek us out, meeting us where we are at. How great is this God? We can run all we want, hide in all our secret places and God will not only find us, but love us.



Fr. John