

Today is the fourth Sunday of Lent, traditionally referred to as Laetare Sunday or Rejoice Sunday – for we rejoice in the faithful love and mercy of our God, who longs to welcome us home.

Homecoming is that sacred moment of welcome when we see the joy in another's eyes and feel the love in their hearts – and we know we are home.

It is a theme in today's gospel – the story of the Prodigal – the one who demanded an early inheritance from his father, and then squandered it. When all was gone – his money, his friends, his self-respect - he remembered home. He hoped his father would accept him - as a hired hand.

He had no idea that his father was out each day watching and waiting for his return. Imagine the joy his father felt when he saw his son in the distance.

Imagine the surprise of the son as his father welcomed him home - as his son – with mercy and forgiveness, with joy and celebration.

Wherever we find ourselves on this Lenten journey may we find our way home to the One who is always watching and waiting to welcome us – as God's own - with joy and celebration.