



Q ZOOM

The sermon this Sunday was delivered in the aisle with an image of the Return of the Prodigal Son by Rembrandt, similar to that above. We were invited to practice visio divina, a way of praying with images akin to lectio divina. Gaze into the scene and receive whatever the Holy Spirit brings and breaths into you.

We noted that in practicing this form of prayer Henri Nouwen sat for over 6 hours in front of the original at the Hermitage Museum. He placed himself in the painting, in all the roles.

At first he was the oldest son on the edge looking in. He was jealous as he too had done all expected of him in life. Then he was the youngest realizing that which was squandered and seeking God's help. Finally he realized that in the latter years of his life perhaps he was to assume the role of the father and bless others with compassion and forgiveness.

We noted an interesting detail on this "mothering" Sunday. At close examination of the father's blessing hands, one is male and the other female! God is father and mother to us all.

The entire lectionary today calls us to the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation. Joshua encourages us to roll away the stone of sin and oppression and instead follow God. The psalm encourages us to know happiness from forgiveness by the God who is infinitely merciful. And Paul encourages us to be newly formed in Christ and to imitate his reconciling ways now that all have been reconciled through Him.

I hope you too enjoy this exercise and find it fruitful!