



St. Joseph Catholic Church
Nome, AK 99762
Pastor: Rev. Tom Kuffel
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24th Sunday Year C 9.11.2016

	St. Joseph	St Francis	St. Anne
Sunday	\$514.00	\$0	\$.00



Proper physical exercise increases your chances for health.
 Proper mental exercise increases your chances for intelligence
 Proper financial exercise increases your chances for wealth
 Proper emotional exercise increases your chances for sanity
 Proper spiritual exercise (15 minutes of daily prayer) increases your chances for heaven.
 Do you exercise 15 minutes a day?

God forgives “the reproach” of the generations who grumbled against Him after the Exodus. Grumbling is more than just complaining, but even complaining takes away our trust in God. Grumbling creates a negative and critical spirit that isolates and divorces people from God. That is what the Scribes and Pharisees did. They separated themselves from the Father and his mercy and became judgmental and condemnatory. That is what the story of the prodigal son is truly about. They condemned the prodigal son for they were without mercy and forgiveness.

In fact, Jesus is the prodigal in the mind of the Scribes and Pharisees. To associate with sinners and outcasts made you more evil than the outcast for you were better than the sinners, self-righteous?. This story penetrates the cold hearted judgementalism of the Pharisees and Scribes. Yet, they continue to grumble, that is they continue to reject Jesus and his mercy for they believed He was evil. They wanted to kill Him for He reversed their teachings. God only loves those who were righteous – not those who were sinners. Jesus comes and teaches that God is not a judge, but a merciful Father who accepts anyone who comes to Him in their pain and brokenness.

Brokenness comes from de-valuing ourselves. Sin seeks a lesser good. It seeks a selfishness thinking that this act or behavior will satisfy my deepest desires. Yet, sin leaves us empty broken, and ultimately heartless. In sin, we devalue ourselves and others.

This parable which is really the story of Jesus Who is devalued because He reveals the Father’s ability to restore the value of each person. The Father has the power, desire, and mercy, to heal each person who is broken, but the Father only heals those who accept and embrace their own brokenness. Self-righteousness is to deny and reject our brokenness and the Father cannot heal, restore, or show mercy to the self-righteous; that is the elder son.

Reconciliation is at the heart of the Prodigal Son. All have sinned and all need reconciliation. Even today, we live in a world of extreme self-righteousness. We believe that my way is the only way and of course we force our beliefs on others. Never do we hear of people offering God’s way, or listening and trying to understand another person’s way and why they think that. People no longer listen, but preach their own agenda on their pulpit.

True reconciliation embraces the other person, especially those who are broken, especially those who are different. Christian Mercy accepts a person as they are, but seeks to reveal the value, dignity, and honor God Our Father has bestowed upon us through the Jesus, Who not only died for you to wash away your sins, but in the cleansing waters of baptism which frees us from all sin, He reveals to us our divine adoption. He reveals to us our true nature. We are born not just of water, but of the Holy Spirit. We are united, that is we are in communion with the Father through the Son who sent us the Holy Spirit. In other words, in Holy Communion we not only partake of God’s forgiveness, but we are united through the Eucharist to be one through Him, with Him and in Him. We are one with the Father.

In Baptism, we’re given a divine birthright, made “a new creation,” But when we sin, we are like the prodigal, quitting our Father’s house, squandering our inheritance trying to live without Him. Lost in sin, we cut ourselves off from the grace of sonship lavished upon us in Baptism. It is still possible for us to come to our senses, make our way back to the Father, as the prodigal does. But only He can remove the reproach, restore the divine sonship we have spurned. Only He can free us from the slavery to sin that causes us - like the prodigal - to see God not as our Father but as our master, the One we serve as slaves.

God wants not slaves but children. Like the father in today’s Gospel, He longs to call each of us “My son,” to share His life with us, to tell us: “Everything I have is yours.” The Father’s words of longing and compassion still come to His prodigal children in the Sacrament of Penance. This is what Pope Francis reveals in the year of mercy, that is the ministry of reconciliation”.

Reconciled like the prodigal, we enjoy the feast. We partake of table of the Eucharist. This is the the homecoming banquet the Father calls for His lost sons. It is the new Passover we celebrate this side of heaven when we attend Mass. We taste the goodness of the Lord, as we sing, rejoicing that we who were dead are found alive again in the embrace of our Father.

Announcements

Sept 11 Relg Ed begins.

Please pick signup sheets at entrance of church and fill them out.

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Nome: Parish Council Meeting Sept 15 at 6:00 PM.

If you have anything to discuss please talk to a council member. We have cleaned up the shed, the stumps underneath the facility, painted and cleaned the rectory, fixed some lighting and electrical problems, upgraded the classrooms.

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 Fr. Tom will be in Kotzebue Sept 15th – 21st

The diocese has subscribed to Fides Catholic Apostolate a website that helps form and instruct teachers, Catechists, lay ministers, and pastors on how to effectively evangelize. All DRE’s lay ministers, and pastors are asked to take the course. Here is the link: <https://fidesformation.com/product-category/fairbanks/>

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 Quotes of the Pope

When those who receive it turn a blind eye to the poor and suffering, or consent to various forms of division, contempt and inequality, the Eucharist is received unworthily.

Fathers who are too controlling overshadow their children, they donot let them develop. Some fathers feel they are useless, but the fact is that children need to find a father waiting for them when they return home with their problems. They may try hard not to admit it but children need it. It is not good for children to lack a father and grow up before they are ready.
 (Francis)

Weekly Schedule:

Date	MassTime	Place	Feast Day	Lector/Minister	Intention	Activity
Mon Sep 12	5:30 PM	Nome	Mary		Deb Curlo	
Tue Sep 13	5:30 PM	Nome	St. John		M. Shannahan	6:00 PM Bible Study
Wed Sept 14	5:30 PM	Nome	Holy Cross		Bishop Chad	6:00 PM Council
Thur Sep 15	8:00 AM	Nome	Of Sorrows		Lisa Svoboda	
Fri Sep 16	6:00 PM	Kotz	St. Cyprian		Doug Tatum	
Sat Sept 17	6:00 PM	Kotz	25 th Sunday	Spruce Lynch	Shawnda Ducker	
Sun Sept 18	11:00 AM	Kotz	25 th Sunday	S. Paniataag	St. Francis Parish	
Sun Sept 18	5:00 PM	Kotz	25 th Sunday		St. Jude Parish	

**Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
 Of these I am the foremost.
 But for that reason I was mercifully treated,
 so that in me, as the foremost,
 Christ Jesus might display all his patience as an example
 for those who would come to believe in him for everlasting life.**

We rarely pay attention to that part of the parable, namely the son's decision to leave his father, probably because we want to focus on the father's forgiving love or the elder son's icy coldness or our own unworthiness to be forgiven. But consider why the younger son left. We know so many families who are broken and estranged from each other. Why do children leave their parents, their parents faith, their parents love?

The younger son solely wanted the inheritance that will come to him upon his father's death which ultimately says, I want a divorce from you: I want you dead. The son wants out; he wants to escape from the authority and control of his father. Yet, what father or mother seeks solely to control and dominate their son or daughter?

The son is completely self-centered. Today so many children like the son, walk out on their parents, leave their homes and have, in meanness of spirit, put great distances between themselves and their parents, their childhood homes. They may as well consider their parents to be dead as far as they are concerned. Sometimes it is justified that children need to leave their homes because of the dysfunction; but never should a child stay encrusted in the bitterness and pain of their upbringing. They need to forgive.

What happens when people cut themselves off from their parents, their families, and their homes? That tearing asunder may at first give the person a sense of freedom, but it's a freedom that comes at a terrible price. The price paid is a loss of grounding, a deep loneliness. They face a world that is often a hostile. Without the grounding of a family, we find ourselves to be strangers in foreign land. Thereby we become vulnerable to being used sexually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Those who abandon their roots are bankrupt: financially, emotionally and so many times spiritually. The point made by Jesus is the emptiness of both sons. The younger son ended up penniless, his self-respect in tatters while living among pigs, starving not only for food but more importantly for love. The elder son did not even have a friend, could not through a party, and was living as a stranger in his father's house. How Sad!

Life is all about relationships. We are made for love but what do we love? What do we idolize? We are created in the image God, whose very nature is to be 3 Persons totally in love and existing for each other in infinitely deep relationships. We came from that God, and our destiny is to find ourselves in living in community. Leaving home, separating ourselves from our parents and families is lethal; it is death dealing, a slow suicide which we know is the leading cause of death for young people.

Consider the terrible truth that the majority of men who populate our nation's prison systems are men who have been fatherless. From the time they were little until they grew into their teen years they had no fathers, either physically or else emotionally. The terrible cost of being fatherless is found in many youth and this twisted image results in hate-filled hearts and souls; it always causes them to become anti-social and commit terrible crimes of violence. Being fatherless, homeless, and alone in our hostile world exacts a dreadful toll on the individual souls involved and a terrible cost to our society. Look at these statistics: Fatherless children are

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| 5 times more likely to commit suicide; | 9 times more likely to drop out of high school; |
| 32 times more likely to run away; | 10 times more likely to abuse chemical substances; |
| 20 times more likely to have behavioral disorders; | 9 times more likely to end up in a mental institution; |
| 14 times more likely to commit rape; | 20 times more likely to end up in prison. |

These numbers reveal the tragedy of family life today. We speculate on the resulting huge costs to federal, state, and local governments trying to manage the brokenness of persons in the prisons and streets. But what about the cost to human life, marriages, parents, and of course to the persons themselves? They are so broken.

Christianity offers the healing. The Father accepts each person as he or she is; but the Father does not and will not allow a person to self-destruct. He gives each person the same reception as the father did in the parable. His will is to embrace him or her, you or me; but first you or I have to come to our senses as did the prodigal son. We realize our Father in Heaven will restore us, but how far do we have to fall before we come to our senses? Many times a person falls so far they are incapable to realize the Father's mercy.

As Catholic Christians, we place a heavy emphasis on God's creation: children are to be born and raised by mother and father, what today's media calls the "Traditional Family." Yet the modern mindset sees this as if it is simply one option among many modern families. We recognize, of course, that many wives and children lose their husbands and fathers because of death, disease, or other causes and go on to successfully raise their children and keep their families intact. I am in no way dismissing the roles of mothers and other women in raising children. But fathers, adult male figures are important but children and men need the roles of women and loving mothers. Men need to be encouraged to mature and be the father of their families even if they have been abandoned by their own earthly father. Women and mothers are to be respected and honored. They need to assert themselves as responsible adults who take ownership of their actions. May God inspire each and every persona man or woman to be a mature faithful Christian.

May we, as Catholics, do all in our power to build up all families and likewise do all that we can to cherish, care for, and support youngsters who have lost either their fathers or their mothers. The first family, Man with Woman, is the cradle not only our American culture but of life itself. Families are the root from which children learn from two different but complementary sides to love, forgive, and embrace peace and harmony despite the struggles that any individual will encounter.

The key figure in today's Gospel account is not the prodigal son; it is not the self-righteous son; rather, it is the father. But the father in the parable is not a human father; but Our Eternal Father. Our Father accepts us at any cost to Himself, even the cost of his only Son to die on the cross so that we might come to our senses and live trusting our heavenly Father in his mercy and in his glory. When we experience the Father's glory, majesty, and beauty, we fall to our knees in awe and wonder, a gift of the Holy Spirit, and know we are blessed with his mighty love.