TASTE AND SEE THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD.

This Fourth Sunday of Lent, we are invited to experience the joy of God's goodness, shown to us through his forgiveness.

The parable we have heard, commonly known as the prodigal son, presents three characters:

a) The younger son, who, upon demanding his inheritance, leaves home and squanders his possessions on a life of evil.

b) The older son, who remains at home with his father, but does not feel the joy of being a son; rather, he feels like just another worker.

c) The father, who is generous and loving.

There are many points in this story to highlight for our reflection, but I want to focus on the younger son, who, after squandering his possessions, "felt hungry." This feeling of hunger represents the need we all have to be loved.

When we distance ourselves from God and squander the blessings He has given us, when we accept sin into our lives, thus squandering His grace, we also experience this lack of God's love, and because of this, our lives begin to be filled with sadness, loneliness, and a need for love.

The father who tells us the parable represents God, who always waits for us, is patient and kind, and when he sees that we return to Him in repentance, He runs to meet us to give us that embrace of love, to dress us in celebration, which is the garment of His grace. Thus, by restoring our dignity as children, He allows us to participate in this great banquet that is the Eucharist.

Being in the Father's house again once we have received this embrace of forgiveness restores the joy we had lost. The season of Lent is a time to recognize that sin distances us from the Father's house. It makes us hunger for His love, and at the same time, it is an invitation for us to repent of our sins and make the decision to return to His house.

Only if we experience His forgiveness can we witness His goodness, and as the psalm says, "He will make us leap for joy."

May the Virgin Mary be the refuge and comfort of sinners and grant us reconciliation with our Father God