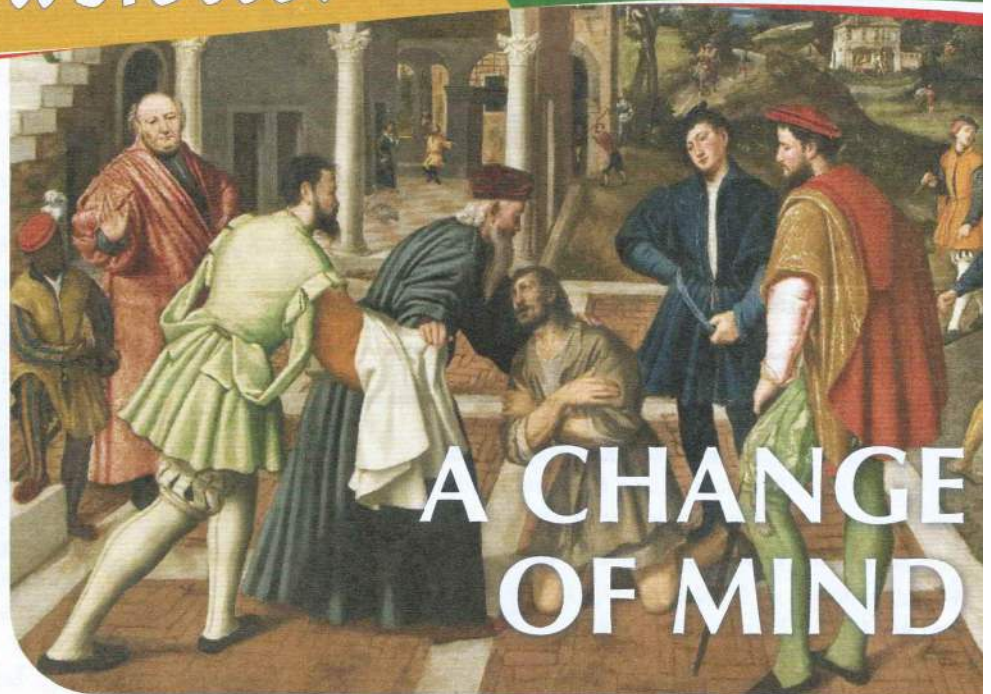


The notion of repentance, which St Peter spoke about in this Sunday's first reading is often misunderstood insofar as it is viewed primarily as behavioural change, a giving up of 'yer aul sins'. The Greek word for repentance, however, is metanoia which literally means, 'a change of mind', i.e., in one's thinking about God, which afterwards may or may not lead to a change in one's behaviour. The story of the prodigal son in Lk 15:11-32 is an outstanding example of this dynamic of change. There are three stages discernible in the parable.

Firstly, we are told that the wayward son 'came to his senses', and decided to return to his father. In a way there was nothing particularly spiritual about this. In all probability it was a matter of expediency and enlightened self-interest. Even a life of slavery at home would be better than the miserable form of slavery he was currently enduring. Peter wanted the Jews to change their thinking about Jesus.

Secondly, when the prodigal son returned home his true conversion began when he was challenged to change his thinking about his father. The younger son acknowledged that instead of being greeted in the cold and critical way he



deserved and expected, he had to accept that his father greeted him in a loving and accepting way he didn't deserve. His father's non-judgmental embrace converted him from one way of thinking about his dad to another. Whereas the first stage of his conversion was occasioned by his own experience of misery, the second stage was occasioned by the revelation of the father's unconditional love. This is an important point. True repentance, as a change of behaviour is not a requirement for right relationship with God. Rather, it is a graced consequence of it. Peter said that if the Jews believed in Jesus they would be forgiven.

Thirdly, once the younger son knew what his father was really like we

can presume that his behaviour began to change. The very next day he may have offered to help around the farm, not as a matter of cheerless duty, like his elder brother, but as a matter of loving conviction. His good works were not a means of earning the love and acceptance of his father, but rather a case of gratitude for the love and acceptance he had already received as a free, unmerited gift. Peter wanted the Jews to become followers of Jesus. ■

— Pat Collins

## Sanctus

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name  
of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

## After the Consecration

The mystery of faith.

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,  
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,  
until you come again.

## THE COMMUNION RITE

**Communion Antiphon** (Lk 24:35)  
The disciples recognised the Lord Jesus  
in the breaking of the bread, alleluia.

## Prayer after Communion

Look with kindness upon your people, O Lord,  
and grant, we pray,  
that those you were pleased to renew  
by eternal mysteries  
may attain in their flesh  
the incorruptible glory of the resurrection.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Reflection

What positive changes have you seen in your parish as it adapts to a changing world?

## Lesson

"Every Christian, no matter what their level of education or experience, can be a witness to the gospel." (Pope Francis)

## Prayer

"Lord Jesus, explain the scriptures to us. Make our hearts burn within us as you talk to us"