

The Communicator June 23, 2026



Sunday, June 21, Father's Day, we were honored to have Padre Victor Hugo and his lovely wife, the Revnda Crissy preside at Saint Mike's. It was definitely a red letter day for all of us present. The Gospel lesson was a parable we all know - that which is commonly

called the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Father Victor Hugo turned it around to be the Parable of the Merciful Father and gave us much to think about. Thank you Padre for allowing us to share this important message more widely. And thank you too to Marisela Lathrop for her powerful reading of this important Gospel.



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Sermon on Luke 15:11-32 (The Merciful Father)

Father's Day – English-Speaking Community of Cuernavaca

When I was a missionary in Mozambique, I witnessed a story that I have never forgotten.

In a small village called Nihomakhala, a young man named Nahota had an argument with his father and left home. He went to the city of Nampula. He was sure that he would be free and that nobody would tell him what to do anymore.

Many months passed with no news. His father asked everyone who traveled to the city if they had seen his son.

One day, Nahota came back. He was very thin, sick, dirty, ashamed, and wearing old clothes. He expected criticism, anger, or maybe a closed door.

But as he came closer to home, he saw something strange. Every night, his father had lit an oil lamp and placed it outside the hut, facing the road.

When Nahota arrived, his father simply said: "My son, every day I prayed to God that you would come back. I kept this lamp burning because I never stopped believing that one day you would return home."

I think that lamp perfectly summarizes today's Gospel.

Jesus speaks about a God who always leaves a light on so that we can find our way home.

We usually call this story "The Parable of the Prodigal Son." But maybe that is not the best title. Perhaps we should call it: **The Parable of the Merciful Father**. If we pay attention, we see that the main character is not the son. It is the father.

In Jewish culture during the first century, asking for your inheritance while your father was still alive was like saying: "For me, you are already dead." This was a very serious rejection. It was not only about money. It was a rejection of family, love, and relationship.

The younger son wanted his father's gifts, but he did not want his father. He wanted the money. He did not want the relationship.

This is also a human temptation today. Many times, we want things from God: health, security, success, solutions, protection... But we do not always want a close relationship with Him. We want His gifts. But we do not always like His way of

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thinking and acting. We want Him to listen to us, but we are not always willing to listen to Him.

The evangelist Luke tells us that the son ended up taking care of pigs. For a Jewish person, this meant reaching the lowest point. But the real problem was not poverty. The real problem was emptiness.

He thought freedom meant doing whatever he wanted. He thought: "I will be happy when nobody tells me what to do." But he discovered something painful: Independence without love can become another kind of slavery.

American culture often values self-reliance very highly. And that can be a good thing. But the Gospel reminds us of something important: We were not created to succeed alone. We were created to belong. To love. To be loved. To live in community.

The Gospel says: "He Came to Himself". This is one of the most beautiful sentences in the Gospel. It does not say: "He felt guilty." It does not say: "God punished him." It says: "He came to himself."

Christian conversion is not only about feeling sorry. It is about remembering who we are. Remembering where we come from. Remembering that we have a home. Remembering that we have a name. Remembering that we are children of God.

Latin American theology often emphasizes this point: Sin is not only breaking a law. Sin is breaking relationships. Our relationship with God. With other people. And with ourselves. Salvation means restoring those relationships.

The Gospel says that The father runs. An older man in the Middle East normally did not run. It was considered undignified. He was supposed to keep his honor and dignity. But this father gets up. He runs. He hugs. He kisses. He interrupts the son's confession. He does not wait for a full explanation. He does not ask for guarantees. He does not put his son on probation.

He simply loves him. And that is shocking. We often say: "Show me that you have changed." "Show me that you deserve it." "Show me that you learned your lesson." But God seems to act differently. His love is not a salary. It is grace. He does not reward achievement. He restores dignity.

The ring shows that the son belongs to the family. The sandals show that he is not a slave. The robe reminds him that he is still a son. And the feast announces

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something beautiful: In God's house, nobody comes back as an employee. Everyone comes back as a child.

And what about the Older Brother (the Lost Son Who Never Left)? Perhaps this is the most dangerous character in the story. He never left home. He never wasted money. He never disobeyed. But he never truly understood his father's heart. He speaks like an employee: "I have served you all these years." He does not say: "I have loved you." He says: "I have worked."

We can spend many years in the Church. We can attend services. Give offerings. Serve in ministries. And still relate to God like employees. We obey. But we do not enjoy. We work. But we do not allow ourselves to be embraced by God's love.

The father also goes out to meet the older son. Because God loves both. The rebel and the obedient one. The one who left and the one who stayed angry.

Today we celebrate Father's Day. This Gospel may bring many different feelings. Some people had wonderful fathers. Others had fathers who were absent. Violent. Distant. Addicted. Silent.

Some people are grieving a father who has died. Others are grieving the father they never had.

Jesus does not say that every human father is perfect. He tells us something even more hopeful. There is a Father whose love never grows tired.

A Father who keeps the lamp burning. A Father who waits on the road. A Father who runs toward us even when we are only beginning to come home.

Maybe the question for Father's Day is simple: Which son am I today? The one who left looking for happiness far from God? Or the one who stayed close but whose heart became hard? Perhaps we are both. And the good news is that the Father goes out to meet both sons.

I want to invite you to have some homework for This Week: I would like to suggest two simple spiritual practices.

First: Write a letter to God the Father. Write it from your heart. Tell Him how you feel. Tell Him about your struggles. Tell Him about your joys. This is a beautiful way to pray.

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Second: Every night before you go to sleep, ask yourself: "Who do I need to welcome back into my heart, just as the Father in the Gospel welcomed me?"

And if possible, make one concrete gesture of reconciliation this week: Make a phone call. Send a text message. Visit someone who is sick or sad. Or simply pray for someone with whom your relationship is broken. Because the Kingdom of God begins every time someone decides to come home.

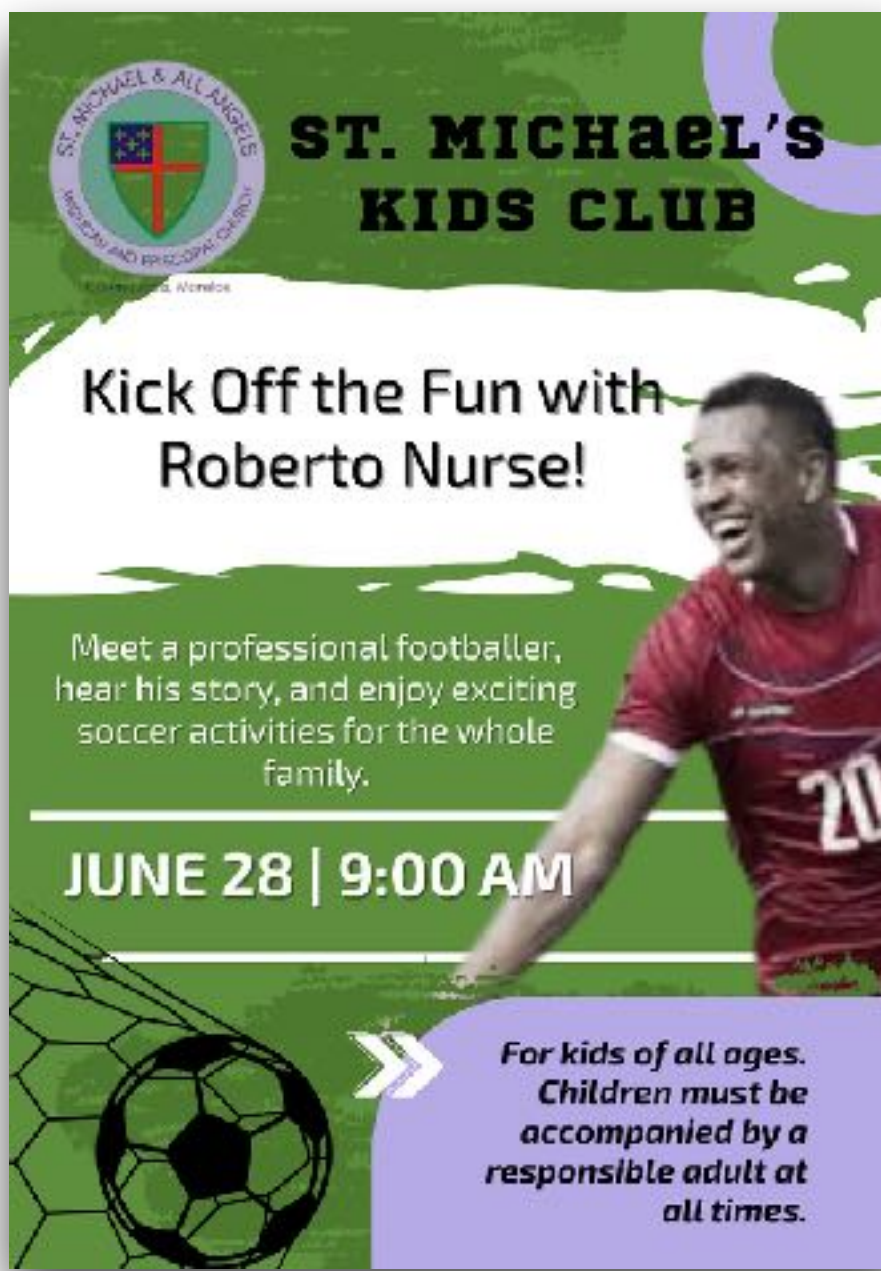
Do you remember the story of Nahota I told you at the beginning of this sermon? God is like that father. He does not keep a record of our failures. Instead, He keeps a lamp burning, waiting for us to come home.

*Father Victor Hugo's homework assignment - **bolded above** - could be something each of us can do this week. Is there someone you need to welcome back into your heart? Is there someone with whom you are estranged? Is there someone with whom you have a broken relationship? Meanwhile, we can all be grateful for the Merciful Father who always seeks to help us be in relationship with Him. Please, forgive the pronoun if that is an offense to you. :-)*

June Kid's Club is this Sunday, June 28, starting at 9AM. Kid's Club Director, Lenise Butler, suggests that kids bring their World Cup "Estampas de Mundial" for trading. This is a really big deal for youngsters!!!

I think most of us are caught up in the excitement of La Copa Mundial and this is an opportunity to share your enthusiasm.

Don't forget to bring a soccer ball.



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SMAAA's Annual Canada Day/Fourth of July celebrations at Saint Mike's are always fun. There will be good music, hamburgers, hotdogs, veggie burgers, lots of good salads, wine, beer, etc. Drinks will be an open bar. Full plates are 120P. You don't have to be a patriot of either country to attend. Just come to have a good time with your friends and neighbors. **All are welcome!!**

A blue poster for Canada Day & 4th of July celebrations. On the left, there are the Canadian and US flags. On the right, there is a stylized illustration of the Statue of Liberty. The text is centered and reads: 'CANADA DAY & 4TH OF JULY', 'Celebrate the 250 anniversary of USA Independence!', 'An afternoon of fellowship, delicious food, and good music. This community BBQ brings together families, friends, and neighbors to enjoy a relaxed and festive atmosphere.', 'Saturday, July 4th 2026.', '12:00 am to 4:00 pm', and 'Donation: \$120 pesos'. At the bottom, it says 'Tickets Sold at Saint Michael's Library, after Sunday Eucharist and at the event.' The bottom of the poster is divided into two sections: a light blue section on the left with church information and a red section on the right with pricing for children.

CANADA DAY & 4TH OF JULY
Celebrate the 250 anniversary
of USA Independence!

★★★

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Donation: \$120 pesos

Tickets Sold at Saint Michael's Library, after Sunday
Eucharist and at the event.

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH
Minerva 1 esq. Eros, Delicias, Cuernavaca, Morelos.
<https://saintmichaelcuernavaca.org/>

**Children under 10
years: \$100 MXN**

FLASH NEWS!! The Library will hold a book sale during the 4th of July celebration. Come prepare to browse the stacks of available books and renew your library card!!!!

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Our weekly hospitality hour is the highlight of the week for many. We are grateful to all who each week bring food to share. Isabel Peralta-Graves does a great job coordinating this important ministry.



We were very happy to welcome back Tere Bredee after her long illness. Jorge has taken excellent care of her and both of them thank all of you who have kept Tere in their prayers.



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Due to a conflict with Mexico's World Cup game Wednesday evening there will be no Mexican Current Events with Charlie Goff this week. They will resume the following Wednesday 5:-6PM.

We look forward to Father Doug's return this Sunday and hope he has enjoyed a wonderful respite this week.

Sunday, June 5, will be the blessing of the new Saint Michael's banner. We hope we have overflowing pews for this celebratory event.

Thank you to Photographers Pat Manners and Isabel Peralta-Graves for the photos used in this edition.