

## Good Friday 2012

Prodigal son

Denials, evading responsibility, mob justice

We all need to be forgiven  
We all want to be forgiven  
If we are brusque,  
If we are gushing  
If we are quiet  
If we are ebullient  
All of us do things in moments of  
All of us do things that are misinterpreted by others  
All of us do things for the best of reasons that have consequences we might never know of

We are all caught up in the web of sin of the world  
That allows us to benefit from the tea industry that ...  
That is the product of big business patronising and controlling the lives of the powerless  
That allows us to benefit from pension funds invested in businesses that oppress workers in this and other parts of the world

We all need forgiveness

And if you feel the burden needs to be shed in front of someone else, let me quote from the Book of Common Prayer

In *Return of the Prodigal Son*, for example, Nouwen describes love and forgiveness as unconditional. Though this is not a novel idea, Nouwen's approach is arguably unique as he approached this theme from the angles of the younger son, the elder son, and the father. Each captures the unconditional quality of love and forgiveness in their own way. The younger son's life shows how the beloved lives a life of misery by thinking he can be loved only by meeting certain qualifications of the lover (which he fails to meet). The elder son's actions shows how the beloved can be depressed because he thinks he should receive greater love because he has done all the right things (i.e., that he has met these qualifications). The father alone understands how to love and forgive and is able to do so and be happy. Nouwen explains that we are the younger son at times (when we think we don't deserve the love or the forgiveness) and the elder son at times (when we think we deserve love or that another doesn't deserve it more than us), but that we are all called to be like the father (and that only by being like the father can we come closer to being loved as we should be loved).

The man who has lost everything so has nothing else to lose

St Fintan's  
The man in hospital