

You are welcome back

When he was yet a great way off.

In short. The Catechism says the center of the parable of the prodigal son is the merciful father.¹ There is no offense, however serious, that the Church cannot forgive.²

Key points

- The heart of the parable is the merciful father.¹
- The robe, the ring and the banquet are symbols of new life for anyone who returns to God.¹
- The gates of forgiveness are always open to anyone who turns away from sin.²
- Returning is a process born of the grace of God, who is rich in mercy.³

Try this, this week

1. **Read Luke 15:11–32 slowly.** Notice everything the father does.
2. **Sit in a church for five minutes.** You do not have to say anything.
3. **Say one honest sentence to God.** Something as simple as “I want to come back.”
4. **Look up confession times** at a parish near you, just to know.

“He arose and came to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and ran, fell on his neck, and kissed him.”

Luke 15:20, World English Bible

Watch out: what this does not mean

- The parable is about conversion, not only feelings: the son reflects, repents and decides to declare himself guilty before his father.¹
- Jesus calls sinners to conversion while showing them His Father’s boundless mercy.⁴

Common questions

Is there anything God will not forgive?

Video answer: Ascension Presents, stoneandincense.com/en/questions/is-there-anything-god-will-not-forgive/

The Church says there is no one, however wicked and guilty, who may not confidently hope for forgiveness, provided his repentance is honest.²

Remember: The father ran first.

Sources

1. CCC 1439
2. CCC 982

3. CCC 1489
4. CCC 545

Quotation above: Luke 15:20, World English Bible. Catechism: official text on [vatican.va](https://www.vatican.va).

Excerpts from the English translation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church for use in the United States of America © 1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc. – Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Used with permission. Our plain wording is not an official Church text. Checked 4 October 2026.



Full lesson, video and every
source:
stoneandincense.com/go/ch1

You may print and copy this.