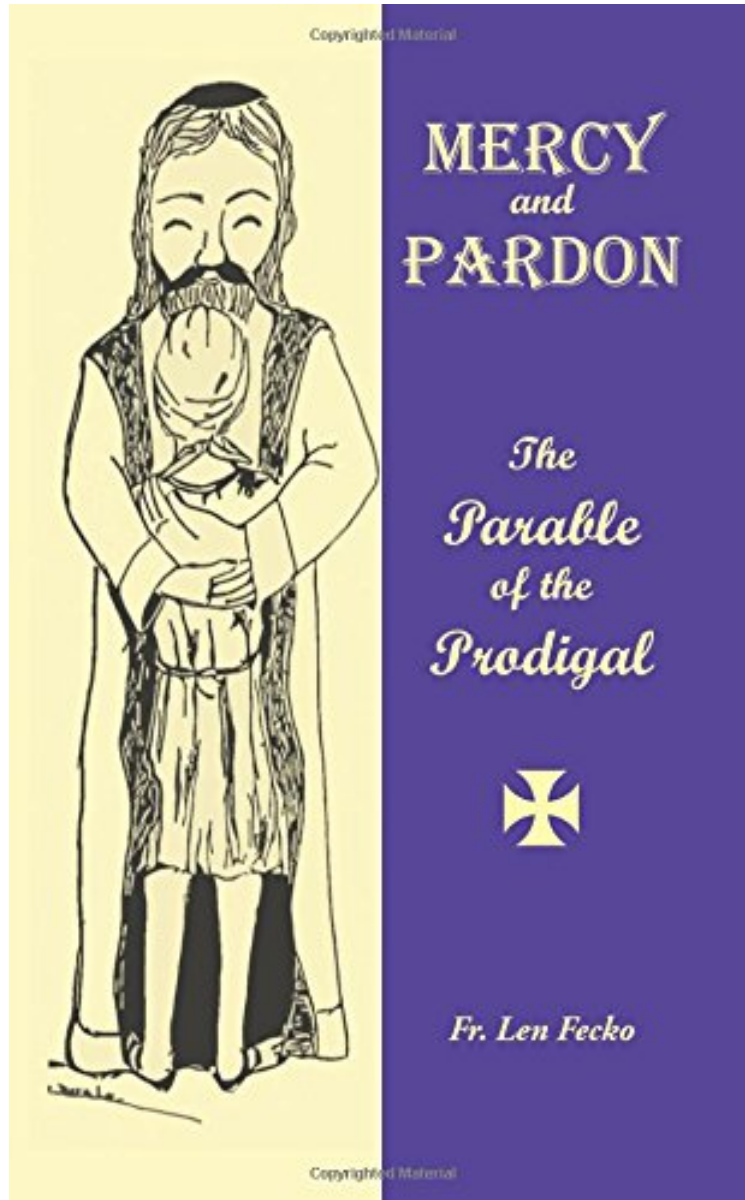


(Ebook pdf) Mercy and Pardon: The Parable of the Prodigal

## Mercy and Pardon: The Parable of the Prodigal

*Fr. Len Fecko*

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**Fr. Len Fecko : Mercy and Pardon: The Parable of the Prodigal** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mercy and Pardon: The Parable of the Prodigal:

When Pope Francis announced that the church would be celebrating a year of mercy, he mentioned that the parable of the prodigal son is one of the stories included in the Gospel of Luke, the “Evangelist of Mercy,” that help us understand the nature of God the Father. The God of love and compassion wants to lavishly bestow an extravagant amount of mercy and pardon on all His children, especially those who have lost their way. In this work, Father Len Fecko shifts the emphasis away from the younger son and focuses on the behavior of the father. Although the parable is often used as a starting point to talk about conversion, the intent and purpose of the younger son is not what matters. It is the response of the father that provides an important lesson for us. He is the character who was disrespected by his son and made to look like a fool, yet he is the one who opens our minds to a new way of understanding the nature of God the Father. Fr. Len sets the stage for his analysis of the parable by considering the historical and cultural setting in which Jesus told the story as well as other aspects of biblical interpretation that are important to consider in order to understand the full meaning of the story. He concludes his reflection by telling three personal stories that provide a deeper understanding of nature of the father and what a true conversion experience might look like.

About the Author Father Len Fecko received a BA in psychology and an MS in counseling from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He spent a year of specialized studies in gerontology at Miami University and the University of Hawaii. He received a master of divinity degree from the Athenaeum of Ohio, Mt. St. Mary Seminary Division, and was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati in 1989. He also received an MA in Pastoral Studies from Seattle University. Fr. Len has served in parish ministry in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and in campus ministry at the University of Cincinnati and Miami University. He has been an adjunct professor in gerontology at Mount St. Joseph University in Cincinnati and in the School of Theology and Ministry at Seattle University. In 2005, Fr. Len suffered a massive stroke, forcing him to resign from full-time ministry. “I am an example of how God opens a window when we think the door of opportunity has closed, especially when we have experienced a major crisis in our lives,” Fr. Len confesses. “Although I no longer have the stamina to be involved in full-time ministry, in 2011, I was asked to give a retreat for the sisters of Notre Dame of Namur in Cincinnati. I have been involved in retreat ministry ever since. I realize now that my academic studies, the work experience I had prior to entering the seminary, and the ministerial experiences I have had as a priest have been God's way of preparing me for this ministry for over forty years.” The reflection on the parable of the prodigal son and the personal stories that I have included are stories I have shared on retreats. It is my intent that as people read my reflections, they will understand the God of love I have come to know, the God who has been present in the people I have loved and who have loved me in return in every chapter of my life.