



Excerpt from *Christ Our Pascha*

Repentance

Christ, the Good Shepherd, who came to find the “lost sheep,” calls all to repentance: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt 4:17). Without repentance, there can be neither salvation nor new life. In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, Christ reveals the essence of repentance as a return to the Father and the acceptance of his gift of forgiveness. He accepts repentant sinners and rejoices at their conversion, “for he is good and loves mankind.” (#780)

Repentance allows a Christian not only to experience God as a merciful Father, but to discover oneself in God's embrace - to see oneself as the son who returned from the foreign land of sin to the Father's home of righteousness. On the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, the Church sings: “As the Prodigal Son I come to you, merciful God... Receive me in repentance, O God, and have mercy on me.” (#781)