Rejoice Jerusalem,and all who love her...

On this Rejoice Sunday, we rejoice because of the mercy of God poured out upon us in the Gospel story of the Prodigal Son.

As Saint Paul tells us in the Second Reading: "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ."

Thus the Prodigal Son story is the penultimate tale of reconciliation.

What was broken was mended.

Where there was despair, there was hope.

Where thiere was disconnection, there was unity.

Where there was sadness, there was joy.

This all occurred when the Father embraced the errant son.

No wonder that today's liturgical color is rose rather than purple; we cannot restrain our joy even in the midst of Lent!

But there is another side to this story. There are three main characters in the tale: the

Father, the errant son, but also THE OLDER BROTHER.

IN THE GOSPEL STORIES WE ARE MEANT TO FIND OURSELVES IN EVERY TALE.

Sometimes, we act like the forgiving Father, when we forgive and let go of festering grudges.

At other times we have all wandered away from the Father's love like the prodigal son.

And yet at other times we can be like the ANGRY AND UNFORGIVING OLDER BROTHER.

Where do we often find the angry brother in our midst today?

Surely those who scream "No Amnesty for migrants!"

Those who judge all the poor to be "free loaders."

Those who would build walls, rather than bridges.

Family members who are jealous of siblings' possessions.

Those who are egged on by racist rant.

The angry brothers are all around us. Their clamor is loud and unforgiving.

In Rembrandt's famous painting: The Father embraces the returning Son and they are bathed in light. But the scowling brother lurks in the shadows. The painter has caught all of the drama contained in the scene.

In my ebook *The Amazing Love of Dogs and God* I point out that the joyful greeting a hound gives to his master's return, can also be some small image of the all embracing love the Father has for all us sinners.

So Saint Paul reminds us today:

God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them,an d entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

And so we pray:

I rejoice today in God's overflowing mercy!

I was lost, but now I have been found.

I was sorrowful,

but now I am joyful.

Praise God for merciful love.

And when I find myself to be the angry brother:

Deliver mr from festering anger,

into your merciful love.

Amen

W