



My friends,

The orthopedic procedure on my left foot appears to have gone well. But it requires me to navigate at home without putting weight on the foot for another five weeks, or so. Those of you who have gone through a similar kind of rehab know the challenge it can be.

During the first few days after the surgery, I kept gazing longingly at the stack of books beside my chair. Such worthy authors as Alister McGrath, C.S. Lewis, Joseph Pearce and Bernard Cornwell beckoned. But each time I opened a book and attempted to read, the fog from discomfort and medications subverted my focus and I closed the cover.

But then I spied my copy of *The Word on Fire Bible (The Gospels)* and opened it to Luke 15 to The Parable of the Prodigal and His Brother. There on page 390 on glossy paper - and in excellent color - was Rembrandt's *The Return of the Prodigal Son*. What I saw on the page was the same as what I saw at on my office wall, as I hope the above photo shows. And suddenly, what I was unable to do by reading, I was able to do through my eyes, through my vision. I was able to move out of myself and into the realm of imagination and connect with the great salvation story of our Catholic Christian Faith.

Leonardo da Vinci wrote that a poet would be "*overcome by sleep and hunger before [being able to] describe with words what a painter is able to [depict] in an instant.*" The adage comes down to us as "*A picture is worth a thousand words.*"

The next morning going back to the Rembrandt allowed me to move to the actual Gospel text, to the wonderful essay on the Rembrandt painting by Michael Stevens, and into the commentary on the greatest of parables by Bishop Robert Barron.

And so now I begin each day as a child looking for pictures in a book, in my Bible book: Caravaggio's *The Calling of St. Matthew*, *The Crucifixion of Saint Peter*, and *The Supper at Emmaus*, Masaccio's *The Holy Trinity*, Raphael's *Transfiguration* and Van Gogh's *Wheat Field with Cypresses*.

Our human consciousness is an amazing gift of a good and loving God. It is a marvel how colors applied to a canvas by a Dutch painter in 1669 can allow us to see into his intimate and deep understanding of the Gospel. How the Gospel parable of the prodigal son is itself an icon of the nature of God and of his watching and waiting for us to return from our distant countries, however we sadly experience them, to his open arms of welcome and absolution.

Please keep me in your prayers as I keep you all in mine.

All confidence and courage in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Fr. Ken Wolfe



*"Return of the Prodigal" by Rembrandt van Rijn, 1669, St. Petersburg, Russia*