I) I love old fashioned medicine . . .
   A) Didn’t come in a cold, dry capsule
   B) **Warm, touch, healing, and comfort**

C) Remember when you had a cold as a kid . . .
   1) Raw sore throat, stuffy nose, fever
   2) Chicken soup
   3) Rub “Vick’s Vapor Rub” all over your chest
      (a) Until you were one giant sticky goo of eucalyptus
      (b) Sweater, tuck you into bed
      (c) Mom read a bedtime story

D) **That’s good ol’ fashioned medicine – warmth, touch, healing, and comfort**

E) Grandma’s poison ivy remedy
   1) Grandma – frontier Nebraska
   2) Poison Ivy remedy – Shot and a half of whisky
   3) Full shot glass for the rash . . . .
   4) Half shot for you
   5) Sit in grandma’s lap and she read to you until you nodded off to sleep
   6) My brother’s and I used to look for patches of poison ivy!!

F) **That’s good ol’ fashioned medicine – warmth, touch, healing, and comfort**
G) That’s what today’s Gospel is…. Good ol’ fashioned medicine
H) Warmth, touch, healing and comfort for the soul.

II) Three weeks into lent, by now we may be coming to be aware of how hard it is to be the disciple we want to be.
A) How hard it is to keep making progress in the spiritual life.
B) How easy it is to falter in keeping our Lenten promises, and our Baptismal promises.
C) How much we need healing comfort, the warm touch of forgiveness when we make our way by to God.

III) This masterful parable – arguably Jesus’ best – does just that…..
A) It brings us healing comfort, the warm touch of forgiveness when we make our way by to God.

IV) We’ve heard the Prodigal Son many times, and it is ol’ fashioned familiar healing for us, and we reflect on it again this week.

V) The Prodigal Son
A) Requests his inheritance – break with the Father
   1) “I’m sick of this house, and sick of you. Give me what you owe me, and I’m out of here!”
B) Goes to Los Vegas – and squanders everything!
   1) Don’t send me email! Vegas is the only place where everything listed is legal!
C) Ends up tending swine, and longing for their food
   1) For a first century Jew, pigs are unclean animals
   2) This is Rock Bottom!
D) “Coming to his senses” – Repents
   1) No longer deserve to be your son, but
   2) Treat me as one of your hired workers.

VI) The Father
   A) Looking for him – caught sight of him a long way off
   B) In a culture where age respected, where young come to them…..
   C) Yet Father runs to his son
   D) This “Meeting in Mercy” takes place out on the road.
   E) Embraces him, and kisses him
   F) Son plays out the scene he has envisioned – Contrition
   G) Robe, ring, sandals, feast!!! – Reconciliation
   H) …. And the Parable could end there.

VII) Older son – Angry, refuses to join the party
   A) I have served you faithfully all these years!
   B) Not so much as a bag of Doritos for me and my friends!

VIII) We my certainly agree with the Son!
   A) By now, we know not to take the obvious endings to
      one of Jesus’ parables!
   B) Deeper look – the oldest Son is just as selfish as his
      prodigal brother!!!!
   C) I served, I obeyed, you never gave anthing to me, me, me!!!
   D) We all make this mistake in our life as disciples
   E) I served, I obeyed, why do bad things happen to me?
      Where is my abundance? Where are my blessings?
      Where is your favor toward ME, O Lord?
F) The Father doesn’t prize obedience and service, but a compassionate heart, a heart of mercy, like his own!!

IX) For example, we should ask: Where was this older brother??
   A) Why wasn’t he on the road with his Father, looking for his brother?
   B) Why didn’t he say, “Father, go home, rest, I’ll keep Vigil for him.”
   C) “I’ll finish my work early, let me go into town, and ask if anyone has heard about him.”
   D) His younger brother most certainly could have died from the life he was living, yet the older brother shows no compassion, no concern, and no mercy.

X) This Parable is good ol’ fashioned medicine for our souls and our aching hearts
   A) It brings healing and comfort, the warm touch of forgiveness, the image of our Father in heaven, welcoming us home with open arms,
   B) restoring us as His Daughters and Sons,
   C) hosting a great feast.
   D) For US! For each one of us!

XI) But, by the same abundant measure of mercy which we have received, we too are called to pour out warm, welcoming, open-armed forgiveness on others
XII) This week, we continue our Lenten Meeting in Mercy by reflecting deeper on Forgiving Offenses, this week’s Spiritual Act of Mercy.

A) We are asked, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to examine our consciences,

B) To shed light on those areas of our life, where, like the Prodigal Son, our selfish desires have led us to waste our gifts from the Father, hurting those around us, leaving them to cry and long for us in our selfish wake

C) To shed light on those areas of our life, where, like the older son, we have served the Lord in act and deed, but with a hardened, selfish heart, and not a heart of mercy and love, like the Father.

XIII) With the Help of the Holy Spirit

may we now be moved to think of those from whom we must ask forgiveness,

and be equally moved to Forgive the Offenses of others

As we prepare ourselves to receive our Lord and Father

Who waits, open-armed, ready to run to us

in today’s Eucharist.