

Victor: a prodigal son who "went home"

The biblical parables, such as that of the prodigal son, sometimes find vivid expression in real-life stories.

In northern Spain, a young couple, professional musicians, could not earn enough to properly care for their five children. The children grew up separated from each other, living with various friends and relatives or in public institutions.

By age 15, Victor already drank, smoked and was starting to dabble in drugs; repeating the parable of the prodigal son, at age 19 he left home. For 33 years he lived a vagabond's life on the streets, using drugs, sometimes hanging out with one of his brothers, also drug addicts.

A romantic relationship led to a daughter being born, for whom Victor could not properly care. He lost custody of her, and she was adopted by a German family. Ever the nomad, Victor landed in Vinaroz (Castellón), and managed to start a new chapter in life, living with a woman separated from her husband. This brief period of stability fell through when she passed away due to an illness.

The loss threw Victor's life into a tailspin—more drug abuse, living in the street, with only the company of his dog.



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Victor's parents pleaded with him several times to come back home, but he always refused.



Victor

Gustavo

Guillermo

One day, Gustavo, a member of the evangelical church in Vinaroz, and Guillermo Kampjes, member of the Good Samaritan Association, **spoke to Victor about the hope of a new life in Christ**, and at that moment he began to come to his senses, like the prodigal son of the parable.

Guillermo explains: *"At our first interview, I could see it would not be wise to take him into my home. He needed to detoxify, with no access to drugs or alcohol. I explained to him how the Good Samaritan Center worked, and the help he would receive there".* In fact, his health was so fragile that he had to spend several months in the hospital before he could be admitted to rehabilitation."

At the Center

In April of 2012, Victor arrived at the Center. **At first he found it hard to adapt** to the new habits of hygiene, regular meal times, the routine of the daily schedule and a set time for “lights out.” But little by little, he adapted and began to respect the rhythm of life there.

However, we started to see the consequences of decades of drug abuse: Victor could repeat the same story he had told ten minutes earlier, or ask you about the same thing several times in a row. At one point we asked about his family, and **he (mistakenly) told us that his parents were dead.** It was not going to be easy contacting his family, since Victor remembered neither addresses nor phone numbers.



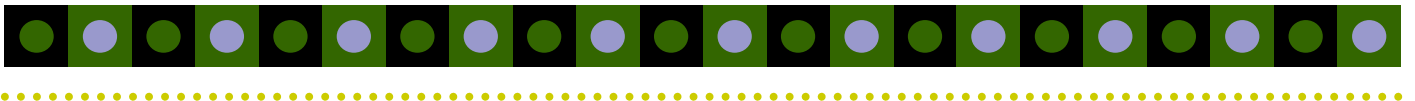
Nevertheless, **one day the phone rang** and an elderly man’s worried voice asked if we had a resident named Victor. I told him we did. The man sighed deeply, and exclaimed, “Thank God! I thought he was dead; we’ve been so long looking for him!” The parents had already suffered the loss of another son, Victor’s twin brother, due to a drug overdose. When I called Victor to the phone, he reacted very slowly, and I tried to prepare him for the talk with his father. From that day, communication with Victor’s family was reestablished.



After a year at the Center, Victor was stable enough to make a brief visit back to Vinaroz. Guillermo tells us: *“When he came back, he gave a great testimony of how he found the Lord. **Nobody could believe it was the same Victor.** He returned to the Center with a group of German volunteers who were going there to work for a few days.”*

Roland Weinmann, Director of the Center, added: *“Victor hoped some day he could return to Vinaroz and be part of the evangelical church there, but his respiratory problems and other health issues provoked numerous hospitalizations. He even had an operation for tumors on his bladder. In January of 2014 **we received news of a cancer extended throughout his body,** and the doctors gave him only a couple of months to live. This brought grief to all of us, but from then on we sought to prepare Victor to ‘return home,’ in both senses of the expression.”*

Not long before he left the Center for his parents’ home, Victor was singing loudly (not normal for him; he usually played the flute) and we could hear that he truly trusted Christ: **“My trust is in You,” he was singing clearly.** Our final service with him at church was simple but very impactful; Victor was grateful, and as a church we prayed for him and for his family. When Victor left, it was clear that he had accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior.



Back home ...

On January 25th, we took him home to Zaragoza. A brother of his there had not seen him in six years, and they hugged and were very emotional. That same day was his mother's birthday. She commented: "**He was very happy, he kept talking about the Good Samaritan Center and his friends and monitors, and he has been very affectionate with us. He walked with his father in the garden. He did miss his dog (which stayed behind at the Center) and playing his flute (his lungs no longer allowed it.)**"

On February 18th, Victor took a turn for the worse and was admitted to the hospital. A couple of days later he went into a coma and after a few hours, returned to the house of his Heavenly Father. On February 21st, Victor was buried next to his twin brother, Alfonso



**Victor was truly a prodigal son.
However, one day he came to his senses and changed course.
In his last two years, he found peace and the
truth of the Gospel.**

**Victor sometimes thought God was punishing him, but he
finally understood that God never forgot him, nor punished
him, but rather led him home, to both the house of his earthly
parents and to his Heavenly Father**

Victor, we don't say "Goodbye" but rather, "Until we meet again!" It was an honor, prodigal son, to get to know you, live with you and share some unforgettable times. Your friends at Good Samaritan love you and remember you with the same affection you had for us.

Francis Arjona,
President of the Good Samaritan Assoc.

Since 1993 the Good Samaritan Association, as the social expression of the Evangelical Church and European Christian Mission, has worked providing drug-abuse prevention programs, and rehabilitation of drug-dependent men at the Good Samaritan Center, located near Pozoblanco (Pedroches Valley, Andalusia, Spain.)

