

Homily 24th Sunday of Ordinary Time.

Today's readings are all about God's desire, for us to be reconciled to Him.

We see this in our first reading. God sees His "stiff necked". God didn't change His mind. Moses is reminding everyone that we, His people, must be reconciled to God. God isn't reconciling Himself to us, we must be reconciled to God.

Our Gospel reading gives us three parables to consider and learn from. A lost sheep. A lost coin and a lost son.

One is the parable of the woman who lost a coin, and when finding it, calls together her friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me!' In this same way, God is always seeking the lost.

We also have the parable of the lost sheep. The Shepherd leaves the 99 to search for the one that is lost. Once the lost one is found, he carries it back on his shoulders. Calling together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me!'

These parables speak to us about seeking the lost and the great joy of being found. Coins and sheep don't have free-will. They didn't make decisions causing them to become lost... But we do.

Our last parable speaks to us about a son who was lost. He made a choice to take his share of his family's resources and leave. It wasn't long before he lost it all, and in the process, he lost himself to his desires and lust.

He recognized what he had done. He knew he had broken the relationship with his family. He decided to beg his father to let him come home. To be reconciled in some way, even if it meant being treated as a servant.

He journeyed home with a sincere and contrite heart, truly sorry for what he had done. The father sees him, and before the son can say a word, the father has ordered a feast to be prepared welcoming the son home.

The other son didn't understand. You are preparing a feast for the one who broke the bonds of the family?

It is then that we hear the father explaining to him, what it means to be reconciled. 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was lost and has been found.'

When we sin, we are like the prodigal son. We made a decision that separates us from the family of God. We are lost due to our own choices, our sins.

If we look, we can see that the creator of the universe is seeking us to be reconciled to Him. He desires this so much that he sent His only Son to us as the beacon of light to find our way.

Jesus gave us a Sacrament so that we may be reconciled to His family. We know this as confession, the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

We see the Priest when we go in to confession, but it is not the Priest who hears our confession and forgives our sins.

The Priest has been granted this privilege by an unbroken chain going directly to the Apostles and the authority given by Christ himself.

It is not Father who listens to you. It is not Father who forgives you. It is the hand of God working through Father. It is the one who came into the world to forgive sins who hears you, our Savior Jesus Christ.

None of us likes to go to confession. None of us like to admit what we have done. After all, it's not like we are telling God something He doesn't already know. In many ways, we are still the stiff-necked people of old.

When we go to confession, we are recognizing and naming our sins before God. We go so that we may be reconciled to Him. Like the prodigal son, we come with a contrite heart to humbly beg His forgiveness for what we have done.

Our true dignity is restored. We were lost but now found!

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As St. John Chrysostom tells us, "it is here that a crown is given to us."

Get to Confession. Be humble and sincere as you confess.

Be reconciled to God and the eternal family, then straighten up your crown of eternal life and Rejoice!