

Padre's Ponderings

Dear Parishioners,

Today's gospel reading from Luke presents us with the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. In each, Jesus reveals the recklessness of God's mercy. It would seem foolish to risk the safety of an entire flock just to find one lost sheep. It seems counterintuitive to waste precious time looking for a single lost coin. It appears unfair to throw a party for the son who squandered his inheritance instead of the one who remained busy about his father's work. Yet that is precisely the point of these parables! They are meant to unsettle us and to assure us of the sometimes puzzling (at least to the self-righteous) love that God has for the sinner.

They also remind us that no matter how much we might tell ourselves otherwise, every single one of us stands in need of God's mercy. All of us are saints in the making, who occasionally get lost and need to be found, who occasionally need to get brought back (sometimes dragged back!) to the Father's house. But to be a work in progress—a saint in the making—is better staying lost. I have heard a story recounted of Saint Thomas Aquinas, the great 13th century Dominican saint and scholar, whose sister asked him what was needed in order for her to become a saint. The brilliant philosopher and theologian—yet humble disciple of Jesus before all else—replied simply: "To want it!"

The parables presented to us by Luke this weekend remind us that even if we find ourselves occasionally sidetracked by our faults and failings, we can always, inspired by God's grace, want to be better. No one need remain lost forever. When it comes to holiness, we can all experience growth, so long as we want it and are docile in receiving God's transforming grace.

The other side of this coin (no pun intended) is that if we are unworthy recipients of God's mercy, then we have no right to withhold mercy from others. I have often said one of the most controversial teachings of the Christian faith is forgiveness. Every time we pray the Lord's Prayer, we say, "Forgive us our trespasses *as* we forgive those who have trespassed against us." This teaching doesn't mean that we should willingly subject ourselves to harmful or abusive situations; it simply means that we can never actively or consciously refuse forgiveness, nurse resentments, or hold grudges against those who have harmed us. Forgiveness freely received must translate into forgiveness freely given.

Perhaps this week, hard as it might be, spend some time considering the mercy God has shown you, and who in your life might be standing in need of yours...

Until next week,

F. Joe



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Rev. Joseph R. Upton, Ph.D.
*Administrator, Saint Alexander
Pastor, Saint Mary of the Bay*



MASS SCHEDULE

Sunday at 9am
Saint Alexander

Saturday Vigil at 4pm
(Preceded by Confessions at 3pm)
Saint Mary of the Bay

Sunday at 8am, 10:30am and 6pm
Saint Mary of the Bay

Monday-Friday 8am
Saint Mary of the Bay

Holy Days as Announced



TRUSTEES & AUDITORS

Nancy Urban, Trustee
John Saviano, Trustee
Patricia Dugan, Auditor
John Flynn, Auditor

∞ MASS INTENTIONS ∞

September 11, 2022

9am: Matthew DePasquale
Requested by Nancy Urban

September 18, 2022

9am: John Mattos Sr.
Requested by his son, John Mattos

∞ SAINT OF THE WEEK ∞



Born in Antioch in the 4th century, and raised by his widowed mother, Saint John received a rigorous classical education. He was first called to the ascetic life, even spending time as an anchorite living in a cave near Antioch. However, this life of extreme mortification was hard on his physical body, and he eventually returned to the city to recover.

Saint John was ordained in 298. He spent the next 12 years preaching in the Cathedral of Antioch, and

it was most likely during this time that he earned the name Chrysostom which means “golden-mouthed.”

In 397 or 398 he was made archbishop of Constantinople against his will. This post placed Saint John in the midst of imperial politics. But he would not be drawn in. He kept a modest household without extravagance and refused to serve the sumptuous suppers for political supplicants that predecessors in the position had. He preached against corruption and decadence and fought for the reform of clergy even deposing corrupt bishops.

Unfortunately, this high moral stance made enemies of powerful people at court and in the Church. They conspired against him and eventually Saint John was exiled to Armenia. He died in exile in 407. He was made a Father of the Church at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and declared a Doctor of the Church in 1568.

∞ LIVING THE SCRIPTURES ∞

Today's Readings:

Ex 32:7-11, 13-14/Ps 51:3-4, 12-13, 17, 19/
1 Tm 1:12-17/Lk 15:1-32 or 15:1-10

From today's First Reading:

So the LORD relented in the punishment he had threatened to inflict on his people. (Ex 32:14)

Consider: **The Lord is persuaded by Moses' prayer of petition not to punish the Israelites for their apostasy. When has the Lord answered one of your prayers of petition?**

From today's Second Reading:

This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (1 Tm 1:15)

Consider: **Paul speaks of God's abundant mercy in the context of his former life as an arrogant, sinful, and ignorant man. In what ways do you think the Lord has been patient with you?**

From today's Gospel:

"I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance." (Lk 15:7)

Consider: **The parable of the prodigal (lost) son is one the best-known parables of Jesus. Which of the characters do you most resonate with: the father, the older son, or the lost son?**

REPENT



"There will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

LUKE 15:10