

24TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME – YEAR C

Today's Gospel offers 3 parables on the theme of the forgiveness of God.

Our first two parables, that of the lost sheep and the lost coin depict God's ceaseless searching for his lost children. The close similarity between these parables, that of being lost and found, reflects Luke's concern to show that Men and Women are equal in God's eyes.

Our final parable, the Prodigal Son, is one we are all very familiar with. A wayward child squanders their inheritance and seems destined for a life of destitution and servitude, but their loving Father welcomes them back into the family, as one reborn from the dead.

Therefore, we are presented with 2 images of God. The first is an image of a God who waits, hoping his children will return to him. The second is an image of a God who ceaselessly searches for his lost children.

So how do we square this circle? Is God waiting, or is God searching? The answer to this question is that both are true. God the Father waits expectantly while God the Son searches ceaselessly.

In our parable of the Prodigal Son, the elder brother, is brimming with resentment toward his younger brother. He remained safely at home, while his brother languished, hungry and poor.

The Son of God however refused to stand by. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity came in search of us. In the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, became both our true elder brother and our God.

In the words of St. Paul, " though he was in the form of God, (God the Son) did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross" (Phil 2:6-8)

Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man, is the Good Shepherd, who came in search of the lost sheep of Israel. He carries on his shoulders all of those who would be found, and through his cross and resurrection reunites them with the Father.

During every mass, Jesus continues to search for us in holy communion. May we receive him with thanksgiving, asking that he carry us back to, "the Father of mercies" (2 Cor 1:3), who waits longingly for our return.