

The Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time/
Year C – 10/11 September 2016

Celebration of The Anointing of the Sick/Grandparents
Weekend/15th Anniversary of the Tragedy in America/Registration
Weekend/Pre-School Open House

HOMILY

Our Lady of Victory Parish Community

1st Reading:

Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14

- “They have turned aside from the way I pointed out to them, making for themselves a molten calf and worshiping it, I see how stiff-necked this people is, “ *and all God wanted to do was love them – and make them a great nation*

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 51 - *Sung*

2nd Reading:

1 Timothy 1:12-17

- “I am grateful to him who has strengthened me, Christ Jesus our Lord, . . . I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and arrogant, but I have been mercifully treated because I acted out of ignorance in my unbelief. . . . Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Of these I am the foremost. But for that reason I was mercifully treated, . . . The king of ages, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

GOSPEL:

LUKE 15:1-32

- “He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, ‘Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends.’ . . . “He said to him, ‘My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’ “

I. For those of us who, perhaps, are at least 20 years of age or older . . . I suspect, we are more than able to remember the events of 15 years ago . . . of where we were when we heard the news of planes crashing into the Twin Towers that once rose high above landscape of New York City . . . and another crashing into the Pentagon near Washington, DC . . . and yet another crashing in a field in near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Perhaps, we even watched it unfold, live, on television . . . such is the information age we live in . . .

Alongside far too many other incomprehensible days of evil, violence and tragedy in the history of the world, 9-11 2001, has been added, and will remain with fraternity forever.

And so we hear, **“The Lord said to Moses, “They have turned aside from the way I pointed out to them, making for themselves a molten calf and worshipping it, sacrificing to it and crying out, “This is your God, O Israel, who brought you out of the Land of Egypt!” . . . “I see how stiff-necked this people is,” . . . “ . . . Moses implored the Lord, his God, saying, “Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and how you swore to them by your own self, saying, “I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky; and all this land that I promised, I will**

give your descendants as their perpetual heritage.” “So the Lord relented in the punishment he had threatened to inflict on his people.”

Indeed, the Lord **did** remember . . . and as only our God can do . . . has done . . . and will ever do . . . acted in mercy . . . and in time, showing humanity the very **face** of mercy . . . **Christ Jesus**, who, as Saint Paul writes in his letter to Timothy, “strengthened” Paul . . . considering Paul to be “trustworthy” who, despite the fact that he “**was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and arrogant**” was treated mercifully . . . “**because [Paul] acted out of ignorance in [his] unbelief.**” Christ Jesus, the One who Saint Paul reminds us, “**came into the world to save sinners.**”

Yes, **Christ Jesus**, the face of the Father’s mercy . . . the very flesh and blood of that mercy . . . who welcomed and welcomes sinners and eats with them . . . who values the 99 sheep entrusted to his care but will not ignore the one who has strayed and become lost . . . going after that sheep and then, with great care, setting it on his shoulder and bringing it back to the fold . . . **Christ Jesus**, the face of the Father’s mercy . . . who, like the woman with ten coins, losing one, searches and sweeps until she finds that one missing coin

and then celebrates this with others . . . Christ Jesus, who reminds us that the Father never casts off . . . not even the Prodigal Son who has turned from him but rather, goes out after him and, looking to the horizon, waits patiently for him to return . . . celebrating with great festivity, his return . . . and who lovingly and with great compassion, not only reminds his other son of his great love for him . . . but of how important the lost are . . . and how finding them must be a cause for celebration and great rejoicing . . .

So, this weekend . . . this weekend of commemorating tragedy . . . the events of 9-11 . . . and a national day of remembrance for those precious lives that have been aborted . . . this weekend . . . in the midst of this we are also given an ever so strong reminder of the great mercy and compassion and love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord . . . **How can we NOT be changed? How can we NOT be transformed?**

II. As I journeyed back 15 years ago . . . I continued to remember some powerful words spoken by many in those days and memorial services that took place back then . . . and there is one statement, in particular, that has never left me . . . that I continue to play over and over in my mind and in my heart . . . and not just around 9-11 . . .

but each and every time evil and hatred and violence and revenge, raise their ugly heads . . .

It took place at the Washington National Cathedral, the Sunday after 9-11, at a National Memorial Service. The Reverend Nathan Baxter, the Dean of the Washington National Cathedral was one of the speakers, and he said: "Today, we gather to be reassured that God hears the lamenting and bitter weeping of Mother America because so many of her children are no more. Let us now seek that assurance in prayer for the healing of our grief stricken hearts, for the souls and sacred memory of those who have been lost. Let us also pray for divine wisdom as our leaders consider the necessary actions for national security, . . . wisdom of the grace of God that, as we act, **we not become the evil we deplore.**"

III. Since time began, our God has always acted . . .
bringing forth life . . .
protecting life . . . loving life . . . restoring life . . . **this**
is God's wisdom . . . **this** is the fruit of God's grace . . .
. and for humanity to act in any other way . . . is to
become the evil we deplore . . .

It is said that experience teaches lessons . . . you and I . . . joined with Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Saint Paul and countless others have experienced the great love and mercy of God . . .

This weekend . . . we celebrate that Sacrament that speaks so loudly of God's mercy . . . God's compassion . . . God' love . . . the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick . . . and while we pray passionately that those who submit themselves to this anointing experience the healing only God can offer . . . while we pray passionately that these individuals, joined to Christ's suffering in a unique way, may also experience His life in a new way . . . let us pray for each of us and all of humanity . . . that there be a profound healing of the evil we deplore . . . the evil of casting off the unborn through abortion . . . the evil of poverty . . . the evil of discrimination, prejudice, unjust treatment . . . the evil of violence, terror and war . . . the evil of the death penalty . . . the evil of any act against another human person that diminishes their God-given dignity in any way . . .

Let us rejoice in God's compassion and mercy . . . let us celebrate this compassion and mercy in Jesus Christ . . . let us not only put an end to . . . but never, never again, become the **evil we deplore.**