

Homily: 24th Sunday: Cycle C: 2022: Ex 32: 7-11, 13-14; Ps 51; 1 Tm 1: 12-17; Lk 1-10

“The Patience and Love of God”

1. **It’s an amazing reality, and a grace we have to be grateful for every day, namely the patience of God with us humans who all are sinners.** We see this play out perfectly in the 1st reading from Exodus when the Israelites turn so quickly from the path of life God has shown them through Moses. All it takes is for Moses to leave for a while, to actually go up to get the 10 Commandments from the Lord on the holy mountain, and the people go back to their pagan ways of worshipping the molten calf, which is a pagan fertility god of the Baals, and thus to give in to sexual immorality and revelry which seems to come so naturally to our fallen human nature – since it brings immediate gratification. The modern world has fallen back into this spiritual trap from the devil. Moses, like us priests now, intercedes on the behalf of the sinful people and God relents in His punishment. Does this mean God is fickle? Not at all God is both all just and all merciful in His holiness, but by nature He wants to help us and be merciful toward us, and so He is willing to give us another chance to repent and change for the better, hopefully. Do we humbly take advantage of this grace of God’s nature, both in daily life, asking for His mercy toward us and others; and in taking advantage of the Sacrament of Mercy: **Confession** where He both forgives us and heals us of our sins? If we don’t, it’s not going to end well for us.
2. **We need to be kind and merciful because God is kind and merciful.** He sent His eternal Son to become one of us and gave Him the name Jesus, which means Savior from sin. As St. Paul points out so beautifully in the 2nd reading, *I have been mercifully treated by the Lord because I acted out of ignorance in my unbelief. ... Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Of these I am the foremost. ... In me, as the foremost, Christ Jesus has displayed all His patience as an example for others who would come to believe in Him for eternal life.* **What a gift God’s patience and love is!** He doesn’t approve, but will tolerate our sinful life for a time - always looking for an opportunity to bring about our deeper conversion to Him and to the beauty of the Catholic faith in its fullness. When we are immersed in sin, esp. serious sin, we are blind, in a spiritual fog. **Let’s all pray the Lord gives us more and more a spiritual mind: His vision, His Truth,** so we will not be spiritually blind and fumbling through this life in spiritual darkness, and then be

shocked in the end when we die, finally seeing the Truth – that was for our salvation - if only we would have went deeper in our Faith and scratched beyond the surface of things.

3. **God's concern for us goes beyond the human norm of things** His teaching on the lost sheep and the lost coin today and the rejoicing that follows is a reflection of the true divine joy in every person God has created. We don't naturally think this way as humans, as a shepherd said once, *if I had 100 sheep and one was lost, I would let it go – no big deal.* Or if you have a number of coins and lose one – no big deal, just move on. But God's love and patience with us humans is fortunately, for us, not that way. Even the one among so many is so important to God that He seeks out that lost sheep that lost coin. **He is interested in us on a personal – one on one – level.** As St. John Paul II said, *that is why as Catholics God wants us to go individually for the Sacrament of Confession because God loves us so much that He wants to reconcile us to Himself personally - with the undivided attention of His priest to bring this about.* God is always pursuing us in His holy love. He is truly “the hound of Heaven” to use that image from the poet Francis Thompson who was a fallen away Catholic and recovering alcoholic who came back to the Holy Faith later in life. I had that image brought home to me at a country Parish once when two of my parishioners there road to Mass on their horses and their little dog followed them (*like an old Clint Eastwood Western – it was great*😊). Unbeknownst to them their little dog wanted to follow them into Church. So when I began my homily I heard this whimpering sound, and said: *is that a dog?* Haha – so the lady slipped out to comfort that little dog and quiet the dog down so everyone could hear the homily. It was so interesting because as the poet said that is how God pursues us and wants us to come to a deeper relationship with Him. He wants to come inside our soul – even when we want to keep Him outside, at a distance. *God wants to make our Catholic faith alive, in spiritual fire, so that in union with Him, the Blessed Trinity: the communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we may experience the fullness of true life and love, beginning in this life and carrying over into eternity.* Sin is the one thing that keeps that from happening, so if you need to make a good **Confession**, come at the normal time I have it each week on Friday/Saturday; or if it's been awhile, or you have more to get into, make an appointment, so I can help you out – in God's patience and love. God bless you.