

September 11, 2022 – The Lost and Found Department (24th Sunday in Ordinary Time)
Gospel of Luke 15:1-32
Fr. John

This Sunday's readings are for the 'lost-and-found departments' of our homes and our lives. Every family and enterprise has one.

We all recall certain instances when we lose some personal item out of forgetfulness or ignorance and perhaps out of negligence or thoughtlessness. Sometimes what is lost is not something tangible - like losing sight of a goal or ideal or losing a relationship. The lost-and-found departments in our lives might contain an encyclopaedia of such stories.

In our first reading [from Exodus] it would seem that even God had lost confidence if not patience with the Israelite people and had to find it again through Moses' intervention.

The gospel relates three of Jesus' parables concerning the loss of coins, sheep, and a father/son relationship. While some of these things just happen - coins are misplaced, sheep wander off because they are distracted but human relationships are lost because of pride or selfishness. Opportunities are lost; time is wasted; resources are squandered and relationships are broken.

The good news is that while there is a 'lost' department there is also a 'found' department.

In philosophical or psychological terms we may speak of people 'finding themselves' which might be another way of discovering or rediscovering their best, truest, and deepest self. This may even have a sports equivalent - like a baseball pitcher finding his right stuff or a golfer 'finding' his game [something I'm still looking for!]

Whatever it was that was lost - the common element was that it **was** there at one time.

Classical biblical narratives like the Adam and Eve story in Genesis speak of the original goodness and harmony that existed before the Fall. It's unfortunate that as Christians, we might have been more attuned to Original Sin rather than Original Grace. We seemed to be more fascinated with tragedy than recovery, disaster rather than triumph. Yes there's no doubting the reality of a mass murder that has taken place in our province this past week; the mourning of the death of a monarch who was a good-will ambassador to the world these past 70 years and even this very day marks the infamous 9/11 attack.

Indeed, we can dwell on our losses. But we also have to ask ourselves: If God initially created us to ultimately share His life - will His divine plan be doomed to failure? Is even God's plan to be thwarted? Is everything lost? These are the questions which Moses puts to God. And while the text says that God changes His mind, He is really making Moses the human spokesperson for the hope that exists within the deepest heart of all humanity. Namely that ultimately the lost will be found and recovered. The crucified and risen Christ is the sign that the Creator's will ultimately wins out in the end.

There's a line that I like from the movie, '**The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel**', that says; 'Everything will be all right in the end. If it's not all right, it's not yet the end.'

Jesus reassured his disciples at the Last Supper that he would lose nothing of what the Father had given him.

Yes our lives have experienced many 'lost-and-found' departments but it's heartening to know that the last word is... 'found'!