September 11, 2022—24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

It was not the only time that Israel fell into idolatry, but it was the worst offense of its kind. After all, God had just freed the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt with powerful miracles and through Moses led them to Mount Sinai to receive His holy Law. Each of the 10 plagues was directed against a particular god in the Egyptian religion. They worshipped the Nile River, and the first plague turned this life-giving river to blood so that no one could drink from it. They worshiped a frog god and one plague sent so many frogs that you couldn’t take a step without crushing a frog and the frog god. Then, God divided the Red Sea so that Israel could walk through it on dry land as they escaped the Egyptian army led by Pharoah. The Lord God couldn’t have done more to prove that He is the all-powerful God and that there is no other.

The old saying is: it was easier to take Israel out of Egypt than to take Egypt out of Israel. They had become so influenced by the idolatry of the Egyptian culture that they didn’t yet know how to approach the one true God. Today, many are so distant and ignorant of God that a very similar thing is happening; they love and worship everything but the one, true God.

At the very time that Moses was on Mt. Sinai receiving the 10 Commandments from God, the people made a golden statue of a calf and began worshipping it as god. The just God threatened punishment upon His people as a result of their betrayal. As usual, (and God wanted this response), Moses prayed for them and asked God to spare them. Moses said, “**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 of the sky; and all this land that I promised, I will give your descendants as their perpetual heritage**.’” God showed Himself as the God of Love and answered Moses’ prayer with mercy. Jesus emphasizes that Divine attribute in the three parables of the Gospel this Sunday.

The good shepherd isn’t satisfied with the 99 sheep who are left when the one runs away and is lost. He could have said, well I do have 99 out of 100, those are good odds; I should be satisfied. No, he goes after that sheep and carries it home on his shoulders with joy. Likewise, the woman isn’t satisfied with the nine coins but searches and sweeps the house until she finds the lost coin. God loves each one of us as an individual and wants us to be with Him forever. We may reject Him, but He doesn’t stop searching for us until the end of our life.

I remember a Bible study with a group of moms many years ago. We were discussing the parable of the Prodigal Son and the mothers unanimously agreed that the prodigal who wasted everything the father gave him, didn’t do enough to make up for what he did. He was sorry only because he was starving! They said they wouldn’t accept that lame confession and let him back into their home.

It is so difficult to grasp the infinite love and mercy of God because we often don’t act with mercy toward others. We want them to pay the debt for their disrespectful words or hurtful actions. We hold onto grudges because they don’t seem to be sorry enough.

The Bible speaks about the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom. The “Fear of the Lord” is a gift of the Holy Spirit, but not servile fear, in which we are anxious and worried about approaching God lest He punish us. Fear of the Lord means that we love Him so much that we don’t want to offend Him by our sin. That is why we must work to overcome faults and weaknesses and addictions. We are His sons and daughters, after all.

The bishops of the United States have called for a Eucharistic Revival and our own Archdiocese is expressing the need for evangelization—sharing our faith with others and inviting them to join us in the Catholic Church. Those two things go hand in hand. The greatest treasure of the Catholic Church is the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. It renews the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary with all of its mercy and power for us in the present moment; it allows us to be united to the Real Presence of Jesus in Holy Communion. We receive strength from Jesus Himself as we worship and adore Him in the Blessed Sacrament. It is the source of our strength to reach out to others in charity.

We have always had Eucharistic Adoration since the beginning of our parish and we have now increased the time from Monday and Tuesday to include Wednesday and Thursday. You will notice a flyer in the bulletin announcing a Eucharistic Procession like our Corpus Christi procession next Saturday morning after the 8:00am Mass. We know that there are many benefits for our physical health by being in the sun light for a limited time. The more time we spend with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, the more we will be on spiritual fire to spread the Good News in our own lives. Please make an extra effort to pray in adoration of Jesus and receive His healing love and strength.