

God's love is Ridiculous! Who does these things?

Who runs out greets his son, puts a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet, after he just wished him dead...took his inheritance, squanders it on "on a life of Dissipation". And has a celebration!

Who does this? Leaving 99 perfectly healthy sheep unattended to go after the one lost one and rejoices over it and has a party

And who has a party over finding one lost drachma, worth .63 cents. Imagine the cost of the party against the finding of .63 cents.

God's love is ridiculous!

To the sensible it makes no sense! Which is the point yet again. "You are thinking like man does and not like God!"

Look at who He saves and who He loves. I'll certainly feel like raising my hand if I arrive in heaven find out that some dictator or oppressor was forgiven and finds himself in the seat next to mine. And what a surprise if a vowed atheist, like the lost and recovered sheep, shows up at the banquet. What will I do if the bad penny, or the bane of my existence is found and treated like a prized lost coin?

These thoughts strike at the heart of my sensibilities. So it must have been troubling those priests and writers, the Pharisees and scribes, who murmured when tax collectors and sinners—of all people—were gathering around to hear Jesus. **"This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."** Then he regales us with stories of a lost penitent, more celebrated than 99 of us righteous, and a recovered coin more pleasing to the angels than nine coins never lost. And finally, Jesus caps off his sermon with the story of that spoiled kid.

Each of us ought to be thankful for ridiculous and unmerited love of God. For it is GOOD NEWS to me and to you!!! A reason to join the party of God's merciful love.

We need to celebrate each sinner's return to the mercy of God...like one celebrates the sinner Saul! St. Paul, once a blasphemer, a persecutor of the Church itself, a man filled with arrogance, a murderer of the Church's faithful...to celebrate with raucous joy how ridiculous God is! Once the great sinner...now honored at one of the Two Great Apostles, second only to Peter.

One need not be as derelict or depraved as Moses' stiff-necked bunch worshipping a molten calf, to appreciate God's forgiveness. Ridiculous! God chosen and holy people! Really? Loved again and again, covenant after covenant. Always and forever loved! DANG!

Filled with grace, we all know the kind of favor Jesus grants in overflowing measure. "You can depend on this as worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Each of us, in little and large ways, ought to be thankful for ridiculous and unmerited love and leave the accounting to God.

There is something good in the worst of us and something bad in the best of us, one of my priest mentor used to say.

Perhaps that is why repentance is always the start of good news. Perhaps that is why our song of God's glory is so aptly found in the confession of our sinners.

God's loving forgiveness calls forth a new vision! Rather than then seeing ridiculous love. We who have faithful might after a life of fidelity, generous sacrifice, and courage in the face of great odds, comes to the heavenly banquet and sees a spectrum of other children there. Some of them have had a far easier time of it on earth. Others seem surprised at being there themselves. A few (many? all?) really didn't even deserve to be there. To each God says, "Welcome, dear and precious one; all I have is yours."