

Homily
Friday of the 2nd Week of Lent
March 10, 2023

Years ago, I haphazardly blurted out LOVE when I told a friend that the bible could be summed up in one word. I felt very proud of myself, even though I can't say just why I was so sure of myself. How little did I know at that time about God's love for me, for this world, for His creation. And how little did I know just how right I was. In the years that followed, as I've grown in my faith, as I pondered my own failures and weaknesses, I have come to know that God is LOVE and that the bible is simply His LOVE letter to us.

Today's Gospel Acclamation from John 3:16 begins the story of God's love for us; His son, the Word made Flesh, our Lord and Savior, our very Brother, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son; so that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life."

True LOVE isn't a funny feeling in the pit of our stomachs; true LOVE isn't found in romance novels; true LOVE is a covenant. True LOVE is given freely, fully and completely, without reservation, without expectations, without strings attached. This is God's LOVE for us. This is how God created us.

He created us in His LOVE and we are a reflection of that LOVE.

That's the real LOVE story; the LOVE between the Father and the Son; the LOVE between the bride and the Bridegroom. That's our story!

So why aren't we all living in the Garden of Eden? Why were we kicked out? Why do we live in this harsh environment with pain, suffering and death?

Free Will.

True LOVE comes from Free Will. Unless we LOVE freely and without constraints, we cannot truly LOVE. We can only LOVE with our own consent.

The parable in today's Gospel is the story of Free Will gone bad. The tenants, in the absence of the landowner, grew selfish and greedy. They were given this opportunity where they could be productive and, as a result, flourish. We are only truly happy and flourishing when we are productive. The tenants believed they found a shortcut. They ignored the landowner's servants, going so far as to hurt and even kill them. Even the landowner's son was killed. Where did that leave the tenants? They made their choice.

We have a choice. That's what Free Will is all about – choosing.

God gave us all talents. He has blessed us with gifts. And He sends us His servants in the form of the Church and our very brothers and sisters, both living now and living in paradise. We are called to be productive. We are less than halfway through this season of Lent. We have prepared ourselves and still need to continue to prepare ourselves. How will we choose to be productive?

