

FR PAUL KIDNER HOMILY 2.27.16

In the opening verse of the 15th chapter of St Luke's gospel the pharisees and scribes have written Jesus off as a fraud. According to them the people are wasting their time listening to one who "eats with sinners." Jesus uses three parables, not just the one recounted here, to show that not only these scribes and Pharisees but also his closest followers have not even begun to plumb the depths of God's love. The behavior of the main character in each of these three parables is (totally) absurd. The shepherd who abandons the 99 sheep; the woman who engages in frantic activity for just one lost coin; the reputable patriarch who gives his property to his irresponsible son who, he knows, is going to waste it in immoral ways. The real message is the boundless love of God for the one whose need was greatest. Jesus keeps coming back to that and to the joy of God over one repentant sinner, whether it had been the sheep or coin that had been found or the wasted son who returned "We must celebrate and rejoice because your brother who was lost has been found." May this Lent be a time of repentance for us so we may experience the love of God and he can rejoice over us.