

THIRTY-FOURTH SUNDAY, NOV. 23, 2014 (CHRIST THE KING)

"AMEN, I SAY TO YOU, WHATEVER YOU DID FOR ONE OF THE LEAST BROTHERS OF MINE (AND UNDERSTOOD, OF COURSE, LEAST SISTERS OF MINE), YOU DID FOR ME"

ALLOW ME TO BEGIN ONCE MORE - WITH A STORY FROM A CHILDRENS'

BOOK - TITLE, OLD TURTLE AND THE BROKEN TRUTH

TELLS A STORY OF HOW THE WORLD CAME TO BE SO FRAGMENTED

WHEN IT WAS MEANT TO BE WHOLE AND HOW WE MIGHT PUT IT BACK

TOGETHER AGAIN....

IN A FAR-AWAY LAND THAT "IS SOMEHOW NOT SO FAR AWAY," ONE

NIGHT A TRUTH FELL FROM THE STARS. AND AS IT FELL, IT BROKE INTO

TWO PIECES - ONE PIECE BLAZES OFF THROUGH THE SKY AND THE

OTHER FALLS STRAIGHT TO THE GROUND. ONE DAY A MAN STUMBLES

UPON THE GRAVITY-DRAWN TRUTH AND FINDS CARVED ON IT THE

WORDS, "YOU ARE LOVED"

IT MADE HIM FEEL GOOD, SO HE KEPT IT AND SHARED IT WITH THE

PEOPLE IN HIS TRIBE. THE THING SPARKLES AND MAKES THE PEOPLE

WHO HAVE IT FEEL WARM AND HAPPY. IT BECAME THEIR MOST PRIZED

POSSESSION, AND THEY CALLED IT "THE TRUTH."

THOSE WHO HAVE THE TRUTH GROW AFRAID OF THOSE WHO DON'T

HAVE IT, WHO ARE DIFFERENT THAN THEY ARE

AND THOSE WHO DIDN'T HAVE IT BEGAN TO COVET IT.

SOON THOSE TWO GROUPS QUIT CARING ABOUT EACH OTHER, AND AT

TIME CAME INTO CONFLICT WITH ONE ANOTHER, FIGHTING OVER THE

SMALL TRUTH, TRYING TO CAPTURE IT FOR THEMSELVES...

***A LITTLE GIRL....WASS TROUBLED BY THE SITUATION, THE GROWING
INDIFFERENCE , CONFLICT AND GREED IN HER ONCE IDYLLIC
WORLD.....SHE DECIDES TO GO ON A JOURNEY -***

***THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS OF IMAGINING, THE RIVER OF WONDERING
WHY AND THE FOREST OF FINDING OUT -***

AND SPEAKS WITH THE OLD TURTLE, A WISE COUNSELOR.

***THE OLD TURTLE TELLS HER THAT THE TRUTH IS BROKEN AND MISSING
A PIECE, A PIECE THAT SHOT OFF IN THE NIGHT SKY SO LONG AGO.***

***TOGETHER THEY SEARCH FOR IT AND WHEN THEY FIND IT THE LITTLE
GIRL PUTS THE JAGGED PIECE IN HER POCKET AND RETURNS TO THE
PEOPLE.***

SHE TRIES TO EXPLAIN, BUT NO ONE WILL LISTEN OR UNDERSTAND.

***FINALLY A RAVEN FLIES THE BOKEN TRUTH TO THE TOP OF A TOWER
WHERE THE OTHER PIECE HAS BEEN KEPT FOR SAFETY, AND THE
REJOINED PIECES SHINE THEIR FULL MESSAGE:***

"YOU ARE LOVED/AND SO ARE THEY"

***THE THEY IN THIS CASE BEING THOSE IN PRISON, THOSE WHO ARE POOR
AND THIRSTY AND HUNGRY AND WITHOUT CLOTHES AND SHELTER AND
THE SICK"***

AND ONCE THE PEOPLE SEE THE FULL MESSAGE.....

"YOU ARE LOVED/AND SO ARE THEY"

THE PEOPLE BEGIN TO COMPREHEND AND THE EARTH BEGINS TO

HEAL...

*AND WHEN I LOOK AT THIS COMMUNITY I KNOW THAT YOU SEE THE
FULL MESSAGE....*

WE ARE LOVED/ AND SO ARE THEY.....

I SEE IT IN YOUR BEHAVIOR.....

*E.G. SOME OF YOU WORK AND CARE FOR PRISONERS, YOU WORK WITH
AND CARE FOR AT RISK YOUTH (EVEN INVITING THEM INTO YOUR
HOMES), YOUR CARE FOR YOUR ELDERLY PARENTS AND THE ELDERLY IN
GENERAL, YOU WORK IN HEALTH CARE, YOU VISIT THE SICK AND OR
SEND GET WELL CARDS AND SYMPATHY CARDS, YOU GENEROUSLY
SUPPORT CAUSES THAT COME UP ALMOST WEEKLY - IT SEEMS - LOCALLY,
NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY....*

*BUT I WOULD BE REMISS IF I DIDN'T BRING UP SOME CURRENT SOCIAL
ISSUES THAT WE ALSO NEED TO PAY ATTENTION TO IN OUR LARGER
COMMUNITY THAT HAVE DIRECT RELEVANCE TO OUR GOSPEL TODAY....*

*NOW I NOW THESE ISSUES ARE EXTREMELY COMPLEX - AND NO
POLITICAL PERSUASION HAS THE TOTAL TRUTH - WHETHER IT BE FROM
THE RIGHT OR THE LEFT.....*

*ONE ISSUE IS, OF COURSE, WE HAVE SEVERAL MILLION US CITIZENS
WITHOUT ANY FORM OF HEALTH INSURANCE.....*

*(WE ARE THE ONLY INDUSTRIALIZED DEVELOPED COUNTRY WITHOUT
UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE)*

*AS I'M SURE YOU ALSO KNOW THAT WE HAVE SEVERAL MILLION
UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS IN THIS COUNTRY....*

*IN THIS STATE WE ALSO HAVE A VERY CONTROVERSIAL DEATH PENALTY
ISSUE WHICH COULD LEAD TO A LACK OF TRANSPARENCY IN THE
PROCESS AND RAISE ISSUES ALSO ABOUT THE HUMANENESS OF THE
PROCESS....WE CLEARLY NEED REFORM IN THIS ISSUE IN OHIO
IN ALL THESE AREAS AND OTHERS.....*

*THIS GOSPEL FOR ME POINTS TO THE NECESSITY OF ONE
CHARACTERISTIC THAT WE MUST HAVE IN OUR LIVES.....*

AND WHEN WE DEAL WITH SUCH SOCIAL ISSUES....

ONE THING WE CAN NEVER DO WITHOUT.....

ONE APPROACH THAT WE MUST ALWAYS BRING WITH US...

FOR ME IT IS SUMMED UP IN ONE WORD: COMPASSION

IF WE HAVE COMPASSION IN OUR LIFE....

*THIS GOSPEL SAYS THAT OUR LIFE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL AND
WORTHWHILE*

*ONE OBVIOUS EVENT THAT INDICATES THIS COMMUNITY'S COMPASSION
WAS YESTERDAY'S THANKSGIVING DINNER FOR PROBABLY ABOUT 100
LOCAL MEN AND WOMEN FROM GROUP HOMES IN THE DAYTON AREA....*

AND SO MANY CONTRIBUTED..THANK YOU - WELL DONE

*AND THEY ENJOYED IT - SEVERAL SAID IT WAS A WAY FOR THEM TO
CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING*

I CAME TOWARDS THE END TO HELP WITH THE CLEAN UP....

*I CAME IN MY HOODY AND JEANS....UNSHAVEN - A TYPICAL LAZY
SATURDAY....*

*I WAS SITTING THERE TALKING TO SOME OTHER GUESTS....WHEN TRACY
CAME UP FROM BEHIND ME...*

*NOT RECOGNIZING ME....THINKING I WAS ONE OF THE GUESTS....
OFFERED ME DESSERT....BEFORE RECOGNIZING ME....*

*WHAT A GRACE....WHAT A GIFT....THAT WAS FOR ME
FOR A SPLIT SECOND.... I FELT LIKE ONE OF THEM - I IDENTIFIED
WITH THEM LITERALLY...*

*IT WASN'T PARTICULARLY PLEASANT.....THERE WAS A PART OF ME THAT
WANTED TO SAY - I'M NOT ONE OF THEM....*

*BUT I COULDN'T DENY FOR A MOMENT I FELT LIKE ONE OF THE THEM -
EVEN THOUGH A FLEETING MOMENT....*

*AND ISN'T THAT THE WHOLE POINT OF COMPASSION TO FEEL LIKE "ONE
OF THEM" , IF YOU WILL....*

*TO WALK A MILE IN THEIR SANDALS....AND STAY IN YOUR OWN SANDALS
IN THE GOSPEL, THE SHEEP DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THEY DID IT FOR
CHRIST....*

*SO, THAT'S THE POINT, NOT TO DO IT FOR CHRIST, BUT TO DO IT FOR THE
OTHER PERSON - THE LEAST ONE.....*

THEN YOU WILL BE DOING IT FOR CHRIST....

*LET US PRAY IN THIS EUCHARIST FOR THE GIFT OF COMPASSION IN ALL
OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS.....*

*AS WE APPROACH THE ALTAR TO RECEIVE THE EUCHARIST
TO RECEIVE INTO OUR HEARTS THE MOST COMPASSIONAT ONE*