Waywardness and mercy is our theme today

The wayward nation

The wayward sheep

The wayward son

Toss in a lost coin just for measure

And we hear St Paul place himself in this light as well

And the mercy that is the response

The mercy of Moses

Seeking to change the Father’s course

The mercy of the shepherd

The concern of the widow for her lost coin

The mercy of the Father

Seeking both his son’s return

The Israelite nation was lost

As God’s right hand, Moses led them out of Egypt

They had witnesses powerful signs of God

He led them through the Red Sea

They lived through the terrifying night of the Passover

They saw the bodies of the Egyptians lying on the beach

They then made a covenant with God

You are our God

And we will be your people
Now Moses is receiving the 10 Commandments

The rule of life for this new covenant

But he is delayed

At least according to their standards

And so they revert to their old ways

They turn to the gods of the Canaanites

They desire a god of their own hand

Made of gold

A god of riches, power, fertility and virility

And God speaks to Moses

*Look at your people*

*I will destroy them and make of you a great nation*

But Moses implores God

These are your people

He appeals to the promises made to their fathers

What would the Egyptians think of this God?

God relents

*In His mercy, He has mercy on His people*

A wayward nation has another chance

Bringing us to the lost in our Gospel

Bishop Robert Barron teaches there are different ways of being lost

The lost coin
It is an inanimate object
    No subjective sense of being lost
The notion of being lost is totally on the one possessing the coin
    There are a number of people that fit into this category
    Dante’s Inferno opens with these people
        Very successful in the world
            But no knowledge that there is more
                Spiritually lost
And God, like the woman in our parable, knows they are lost
    He created them
        And he seeks them out
The lost animal
    It is at least aware that it is in need
        It may be in danger
            But it may be powerless to do anything about this
In a rural area
    Most of us have heard the bawling of a calf
        Seeking its mother
            Not knowing where to turn
                Not knowing where to go
                    The shepherd hears his sheep
                        And he goes off to search for it
Then there is the Prodigal Son
In rebellion
Life is not fair
He did not sign up for this
This is not what he expected
So now he demands that he get his share
And demanding it now
Then he comes to his senses
He realizes what he has done
And he seeks to return
Even though he is not motivated by remorse
His father not only allows him back
He runs out to meet him
Throwing a party because he has returned
This woman
The shepherd
This father
All rejoice and celebrate what was lost
And is found
But not all celebrate
The older son is there
He hears the celebration
    And refuses to have anything to do with his brother
    And now, he rejects his father
But in reality, he had already rejected his father
    Because he did not see himself as a son
    He simply saw himself as a slave
    But the father sees his son
    And he comes to him as well

All these years I served you
    Not once did I disobey one of your commands
    He won’t even acknowledge this is his brother
    Calling him simply his father’s son

The father pleads with him
    To see correctly
    Your brother was dead
    And is now alive
    The older brother is called to see his relationship with his father

in a new light
    To see himself as a son
    Not a slave
    To see his father
    Not a master
This was a challenge for him
   It is a challenge for us
     When we sin
       God respects our free will

We are like the Prodigal Son
   We are fooled by sin
When these things are kind of dangled before our eyes
   Sin is not enjoying the things of creation
      It is demanding them and possessing them
         We think more will make us happy
               Like the prodigal son

At first the food sated him
   The wine exhilarated him
      The women pleased him

These things can happen to us
   So many false gods can become our golden calf
      It often happens little by little
         We don’t even recognize our lives are out of balance

Until like the prodigal son
   We find ourselves broken, empty and all alone
      We are not enjoying the goods of creation as they are meant to be enjoyed
**All things are for the good of those that love God**

- We defy God’s wise and loving design
- And twist them to what we think is good for us

Sin initially tastes good and that is what draws us

- But it turns sour and leaves us empty
- Then when we realize what we have done

Where our relationship with the Holy Trinity has been injured

We need humility

- The humility to acknowledge what we have done
- To call it by name and confess it

*Forgive me Father for I have sinned*

Listen to the Father speaking to the older son

- Listen to the Father speaking to our heart

Like St Paul

- In today’s second reading
- He gives his personal testimony

*I had been a blasphemer and a persecutor and arrogant*

- I have acted in ignorance
- But he was treated with mercy

We do not know how the older son responded to the Father’s plea

- But we do know how we should respond
- Following the example of St Paul
The grace of our Lord is abundant

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners

He doesn’t wait for our perfection so he can forgive us

He invites us back to himself and forgives us

When we confess our sins

He offers his grace to perfect us

Do I believe this for others?

Do I believe it for myself?