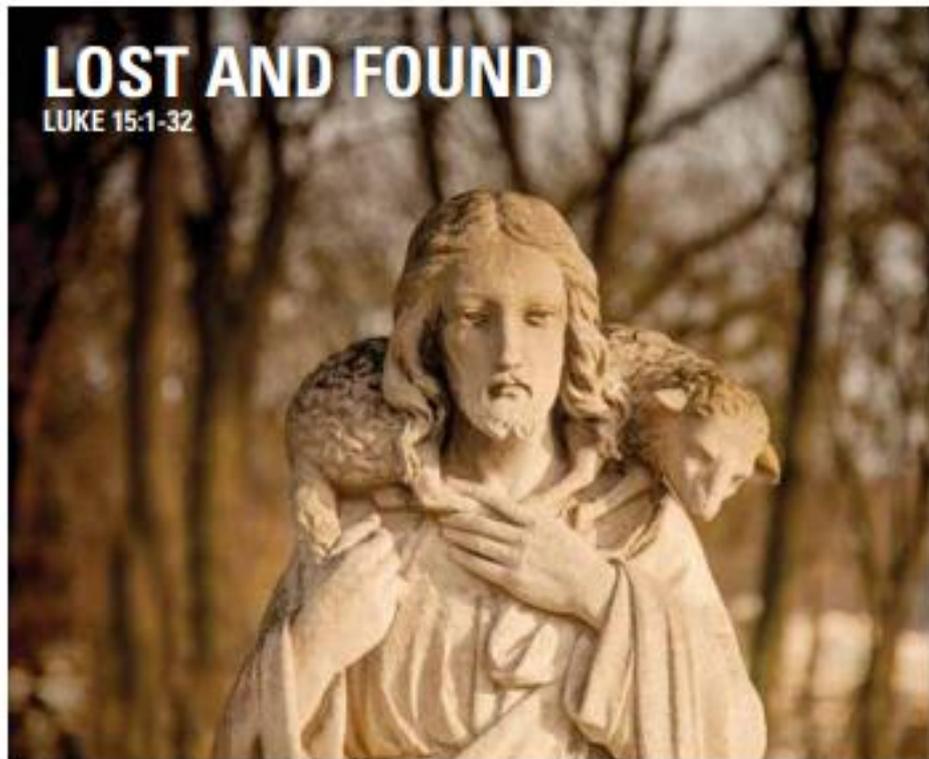


LOST AND FOUND

LUKE 15:1-32



In today's Gospel, Jesus tells three parables about things lost and found – a lost sheep, a lost coin and a lost child.

The reason Jesus tells them is that the professional religious people were aghast that a man who claimed to be speaking in God's name was welcoming all sorts of people without demanding that they first perform the religious rites needed to bring them back into good standing in the community. The parables are Jesus' response to the exclusive nature of the religion of the Pharisees.

Each parable speaks of a God whose love and concern for his people goes way beyond what we would regard as rational or normal behaviour. Why would a shepherd risk losing 99 sheep to look for a stray that wanders off? Why would a woman spend the entire day turning her house upside down searching for the equivalent of a single penny and then invite her neighbours to celebrate with her over finding it? Her neighbours would think she was mad. Why would a parent throw a party for a renegade son who had treated him so badly and squandered his inheritance? No wonder the elder son is indignant.

And yet, Jesus says that this is what God is like – a God who loves us like mad, who forgives us unconditionally, who includes rather than excludes. And that's the model for how we should behave, also. ■

REFLECT

Some time ago, I was in Anfield for a Premier League game. Needless to say, as a devoted Liverpool fan, I had a wonderful time. Great seat, great company, great atmosphere, great result. Only one thing deflected from the experience.

It was a public announcement that was repeated several times: "Would XX please make himself known to a steward or a police officer? XX from XX who has become separated from his dad."

As I watched the match, I thought of the boy – alone, confused, frightened, probably crying. And I thought of his dad – panicking, frantic, berating himself for his negligence in losing his son, his enjoyment of the game also lost.

And then, because the announcement stopped after a while, I imagined the pair reunited – the joy on the little boy's face, the extraordinary relief of his dad, their tender embrace, and how, assuming they were sensible enough to be Liverpool supporters, they could now enjoy the rest of the match in each other's company – safe and secure.

Thankfully, I've never been in a situation like that – so I can't even begin to imagine the panic, the fear, the cold chill that comes over a child when they look around and discover their dad or mum isn't there, or a parent who discovers that their child isn't by their side any more. That he or she is missing. It must be an appalling realisation.

It's something that too many families have experienced – a son or daughter suddenly missing; a loved one vanishing into thin air; the desperate searching, the heartbreaking appeals for information, the never-ending longing for answers.

We remember today all those who are missing, the well-known cases as well as the not so well-known, and we ask the Lord to comfort their devastated families who never stop looking for them. ■

PRAY

Pray for all those who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks in America on this day 21 years ago. Ask the Lord to comfort the grieving and for an end to all acts of violence.

LEARN

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

God never gives up on us, no matter how often or how badly we let God down.

The extraordinary story of our salvation is that our God is a loving, forgiving God who never stops loving and forgiving us.

God's mercy turns the logic of justice on its head.

DO

Imagine that you are the elder son in the story of the prodigal. Place yourself in his shoes. How do you think you would have reacted to the Father's forgiveness of the younger son?

SAY

Thank you, Lord, for always loving and forgiving me. Help me to never stray from you. Amen.

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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11th September 2022
24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Weekend masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet
7:30pm Leitrim
Sun 9:00am Gargory
11:00am Dromara

Weekday masses

Mon 9:00am Leitrim 7:30pm Dechomet
Tues 9:00am Dromara
Wed 7:30pm Leitrim
Fri 7:30pm Dromara

Receased deceased

Patrick McKey, Moybrick, Dromara
Winne Ward, Backaderry Road, Leitrim

Anniversary Masses

Dechomet

Sat 10th Rose and Pearse Gilmour

Leitrim

Sat 10th Michael O'Prey (MM)
Eddie McAleenan
Wed 14th Patsy Malone
Sat 17th Mary Catherine and Seamus Doyle
John and Kathleen McMullan and
Deceasd Family Members
(Clanvaraghan)
Owen Kelly and Deceased Family
Members (Backaderry)
Sarah Magennis (Legananny)

Gargory

Sun 11th Josephine King

Dromara

Fri 16th Peter Greenan (Castlewellan)
Sun 18th Francis McEvoy
Pat and John Gordon

Trócaire is looking for people to join our team of Christmas fundraisers to help respond to the urgent need of poor communities around the world, especially the millions of people affected by the hunger crisis in East Africa. If you would like to find out more about what you can do to help now or over the Advent and Christmas period, then please email Mark McMahan at infoni@trocaire.org or call (028) 9090 8030.

Collections	Dromara	Drumgooland
Parish	£380	£680
Priest	£431	£1,068
Pope	£144	£249

Altar Servers

Application Forms will be available in the schools this week.

We welcome into Drumgooland Parish Alanna Grace Quinn and Mia Pauline Doyle

Congratulations to Deirdre McCabe and Robert O'Hare who were married recently

Dromara Parish Council

Meeting Mon 12th Sept at 8pm St Michael's Hall

Yoga for Health & Well-Being

Classes commencing week of 12th Sept in Dechomet and Finnis. Bookings/queries Tel: 07989 688939

Dromara Community Group Charity Coffee Morning Sat 17th Sept 11am-1:30pm in aid of Helping Hand Charity at Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children and The Atlas Centre Learning and Support for everyone. Come along and show your support. Further details: Joan Browne 07803 117641.

Dromara Surgery Climbs Slieve Croob on Sat 24th Sept, starting from Peter Morgan's Cottage, in aid of 'Slieve Croob First Responders'. To donate contact Dromara Surgery on (028) 97532217, or Yvonne Fegan, or via link: https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/dromaraclimbscroob?utm_term=RV3VBZMW

Diocesan Seminarians

As students begin/return to college at this time of year, please keep our diocesan seminarians in your prayers. Anthony, from the parish of Dromore, is beginning his fifth year of studies for priesthood in Maynooth, while Philip, a new student from Mayobridge, is beginning first year in Spain. We pray for them and for more vocations to priesthood and religious life.