

## Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Mar 6th 2014

As I read and prayed over today's readings for Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lenten season, I kept hearing the gentle but firm invitation to "come home!" "Come home to the One who loves you!"

As if I had been on a grueling cross country trip, delay after delay of flight schedules due to icy and frigid weather, with little nourishment and even less sleep in crowded terminals, and finally arriving at my front door, being welcomed by the smiling faces of my family and the smell of my favorite soup. "We're glad you are home – it is good to see you!" That kind of coming home.

In the midst of overly busy days with too many deadlines and too much that must be accomplished, not having time to sort out the tensions of relationships with family, colleagues or friends, no time to listen to one self or one another - to hear what is going on beneath the surface, no time to listen for hopes and dreams, fears and hurts, the need for apologies and forgiveness and reconciliation, we hear "come home". Come home first to the One who loves you, and then come home to the ones who love you.

We live in the midst of driving kids to soccer games and music lessons, and working overtime so we can afford the latest gadgets and the most up to date technology for our kids so others, most especially our kids, will think of us as a good parent. We are in a frenzy, squeezing in yoga and a work out at the gym so we can tell ourselves we are taking care of ourselves. But our hearts are troubled, our minds are agitated, our bodies are restless, all the while apprehensive that we don't quite measure up, even when we are doing all the things we think we ought to be doing. We are hesitant to take time to pray, lest God add to the already taxing demands on our time and energy. In the midst of this contemporary rendering of today's gospel, Jesus invites us to come home, "Come home to the Love that awaits you, come home to the One who is calling you; just come home."

This Lent, listen to how God is calling you home. It may be to spend more time with family, or to reach out to a lonely neighbor. Perhaps it's making a daily practice of reflection on the graces and blessings of the day or attending daily mass. It might just be getting reacquainted with the gym! How will you recognize God's voice amidst the clamor of so many insistent calls? How will you know? You will find you are more peaceful, more grateful, more hopeful, more generous, more loving... and it will feel like coming home.

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