

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Mar 24th 2017

Ours for the Asking

“I will heal their defection, says the Lord, I will love them freely.” (Hosea 14:5)

The prodigal son begins his homeward trek in the Old Testament. Israel insists on going its own way and falls into ruin. In despair, the people again hear God’s words: “return to me.” Tempted by our own strength, we “collapse through our guilt.” We are broken. But these shards are not swept aside. Humbled and cherished, we are lifted and healed.

“The world is big and I’m so small.” This line from a child’s book echoes through our lives. Our world has many sides and secrets. Who can figure it all out? But God insists: “Hear, O Israel! It is simpler than you think. Don’t be stunned by complexity. Here is the plan I have fashioned: you are made for love.” And whom do we love? Our God, our neighbor, and our selves. Enter into any task with my whole heart, mind, and strength. There You are—the One who sustains each fiber of my being.

Who is my neighbor? 37 years ago on this day Archbishop Oscar Romero was killed after calling for an end to the violence in El Salvador. Like our Savior, Romero was moved by the plight of the poor. He awakened from his cautious reserve and could remain silent no longer. Like bread broken, he offered his life: “may my blood be the seed of liberty.” Rooted in love, the Blessed Romero bears fruit.

John Kavanaugh, S.J., taught and wrote at St. Louis University for many years until his death in 2012. John was a philosopher of liberation. For John, human life is ineluctably religious: each person embodies a book of revelation. What functions as God in my life? Which gospel do I live by? How am I saved? In a consumer society, everything appears to have a price.

Prodigious love is confounding. What’s the catch? Get real

Wary and spent, we prodigals again hear the call: come back.

Jeanne Schuler-Creighton University's Philosophy Department