

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Mar 8th 2013

I will heal their defection, says the Lord, I will love them freely; for my wrath is turned away from them. Hosea

My mother is a brilliant, quiet, wise woman who just turned 90. No matter what one of her six kids has done, she never yells or lectures, let alone threatens to cut us off. There's not an ounce of martyrdom in her, just steadfast love and support. "You'll never regret standing by your kids," she wrote me one time.

Anyone lucky enough to have a parent like Mother should resonate to Hosea's 'description of God's love for us. "I will heal their defection, says the Lord, I will love them freely; for my wrath is turned away from them."

Like a great parent, God knows we will fail but He doesn't give up on us. We sin again and again and He still takes us back. He heals us just as a parent helps an errant child heal.

I'm writing this on Ash Wednesday, beginning my annual attempt to repent and improve. Spiritually, I'm a lot like what we gym rats call the "resolution people" who show up in January and disappear by February. I'll make a good faith attempt but by the time you read this, I'll likely have resumed my chocolate chip habit and failed to visit St. John's Church daily. My favorite sins won't have changed.

That said, when I think of God as loving us like my Mom loves us, the First Great Commandment cited in Mark's gospel passage today becomes a lot more accessible. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with your mind, and with all your strength." I can love a God who loves me in spite of my failings including backsliding during Lent!

I hope you are having a great Lent – and you've still got a couple weeks to make good on all those resolutions!

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