

10th Sunday in Ordinary Time – June 9/10, 2018 – Reflection

When I was three years old, my Mom and Dad and I lived in Virginia. Our home was on a quiet little road and across the road, there were woods. In the good weather, when my Mom would do the wash, she and I would go to the edge of the woods to hang the clothes on a line to let them dry in the fresh air and take on the scent of the trees.

One day, I guess Mom was so engrossed in hanging the wash on the clothesline, that she lost track of me. I'm sure it was only a few seconds but that was plenty of time for a curious little kid to wander off to explore those mysterious woods.

My Mom told me that when she looked around and didn't see me, she first calmly called out for me, "Danny, Danny, come here!" I never heard her so I never came. Then she grew more frightened as she looked at the woods where I was never supposed to go. Her calls became louder, more frantic, "Danny, Danny, where are you?!!!" I can't imagine how terrified she must've been ... her child was lost and she couldn't find him! Deeper and deeper into the woods she ran, all the while calling my name at the top of her lungs. All at once, she came into a little clearing, and there I was, sitting, happily playing with some sticks and dirt. I wasn't scared 'cause I wasn't lost ... I was right there! I looked up and said, "Hi Mommy!" She reached down and hugged me so tight I thought she'd strangle me! Come to think of it, maybe that's what she was trying to do!!

"... the Lord God called to the man and asked him, 'Where are you?'"

I know it's probably not right to think this way, to explain how the Almighty works in human terms, with human emotions, but I think that over all the centuries and centuries of people living and choosing and acting and messing up since the garden of Eden, God's gotten pretty worried and scared and disappointed and sad about us human beings.

How heartbreaking to have your own child hide from you because they wouldn't take your advice and now they were so ashamed that wouldn't even face you.

How frightening to look for one child and ask his own brother where he was only to have that brother coldly dismiss your question as none of his concern ... "What have you done, Cain?"

How wearying to ask your chosen leader of men to work one more sign to give people water only to have him doubt the power of your love, your faithfulness to your promise, "And Moses struck the rock," but he struck it twice because he doubted God would provide water for this stiff-necked people.

How sad to learn your own fair-haired one could be so treacherous and blinded by lust that he would stoop to lies and murder to cover his adultery, "David, the man is you!"

How gut-wrenching it must be to have your best friend and trusted successor boast to everyone who might listen that he would stand by you no matter what only to have him say a few hours later, "I'm not with Him ... I don't know Him ... hell, I never even met Him!!!" And just then, a cock crowed.

How it must've stung to be kissed on the cheek, sold out for a few little coins, led into a deadly trap by one you chose and loved, one whose petty thefts you knew about but covered over, "Friend, what you are about to do, do quickly."

When it comes to God, our Father, our Brother, our Life, we humans haven't exactly covered ourselves with glory. How many times have each of us become so lost, wandered so far, done so much that was shameful and unspeakable even so that all we can do is hide and cover up our naked guilt?!!

Yet here's the glorious, amazing, utterly wonderful truth. No matter how lost we are, no matter how far we've strayed, no matter what we try to hide or what shame we carry, God never stops looking for us, never stops calling to us, never stops begging us to come home.

All we hafta to is listen to His voice, come out of the shadows, and walk into His strong loving, forgiving arms.

"Hi Papa!"