

Fr. O' Connor's Homily, March 1, 2020

“You’ve got to know when to hold em’, know when to fold em’, know when to walk away, know when to run.” Do you recognize these words? They come from the song, “The Gambler” sung by Kenny Rogers.

Who do you think is the biggest gambler of all time? Well, I hope you don’t think that I’m being disrespectful but I think the biggest gambler of all time is God. And his gamble was and continues to be creating us, creating humans and the biggest gamble of all was giving us freedom, free will.

Now why did he make us free? Because God wants us to experience love, His very life. A creature that is not free can not experience true love, divine life.

If we were not free we would be like robots. How would you like to be a robot? You would be perfect but there would be no delight, no love.

Of course there is a downside to freedom and that is we can turn our back on God, on God’s love. The first reading today describes the first time humans turned their backs on God’s love. Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. They disobeyed God’s command. There are always limits to human freedom because we are not God. In this act of choosing themselves over God, sin enters our human community.

And with this sin the flood gates of evil enters our human family, enters all creation.

Each of us inherits the original sin which is described in our first reading from Genesis. You’ve probably heard many descriptions of original sin. It’s a mark, it’s like a curse etc., etc.

Here is how I understand original sin.

First of all, it is the companion of human freedom. We are free to choose God, to choose God’s will or we are free to turn away from God, His will, not to choose God’s will.

Original sin is that urge, that self-centeredness, that meanness within us that makes us choose against God’s will. I think you know what I mean. Once there is freedom there is the possibility, even the attraction to go against God’s will.

No freedom-no original sin

No freedom- no choosing God, no choosing evil, no choosing life.

So I think it’s fair to call God the Gambler

This Lent we are called to choose Life, to choose God, to choose Love, eternal life.

This Lent I’m recommending Lectio Divina to you as a Lenten practice. You can do this in a group or by yourself and please don’t forget the poor. When you touch the poor you touch the heart of God.