

**Sunday, September 11**

**The Rev Fanny Belanger**

**Luke 15:1-10**

The last time I was in New-York city, I visited ground zero for the first time since they have completed the Memorial. I must say it was really impressive: the two giant fountains inside the foundations of what had been the twin towers, you look at the fountains from above and you cannot see the bottom of them, the water from each larger fountain falls down into another inner fountain, and it looks like a never ending crying river. On the border of the main fountains are engraved the names of all the people who died on that day, some flowers – white roses, usually – are often laid down on them.

When you walk there in the midst of the whispering crowd and you think about what happened, and all those people, it's a lot to take in. But it's only when I entered the museum that I could really feel my heart break. They have a room in the museum where you can listen to the recorded stories of the victims told by their close ones. It's not about their resume, you know. It's about how they mattered to the ones who loved them. There is a story I will probably never forget, a lady who talked about her grand-daughter who died on one of the planes on that day. She was four years old. The lady said: “She loved to help me in the garden, she would kiss all the flowers”. It was really touching and very sad and yet very beautiful. I think what they are trying to do at the museum is to show that the victims weren't only *a lot of people*. They are trying to show how each one of them was precious and unique and cherished. Irreplaceable.

Well, I think this is really the feeling we can get from the Gospel today. God loves humanity not as a big abstract flock. God loves each one of us as unique. He loves each one of us as this woman loved her grand-daughter, like this little girl loved each flower in her grand-mother's garden and therefore would kiss each of them. Every life is precious to God because each one of us is unique, irreplaceable and this is what makes death so tragic. But this is also why it is not only beautiful to hear these two parables of the lost sheep and of the lost coin today, but it is also very comforting.

It is very comforting because we hear from Jesus's mouth than all we think is lost can be - and will be – found again. I think the parables as of today aren't so much about Christ saving us from our sins and bringing us back on the “right path”, I think it's more about Jesus saving us from of our separation from God, rescuing us from these places of destruction, death and despair and bringing us back together, in this world – when it's possible – and ultimately in heaven. Each one of us is precious, even if we are lost, forgotten, crushed by this world. God, as he brought back Jesus, will bring us back again.

I remember that I was myself a little girl who used to love to help her grandmother. My grandmother was always busy: cooking, cleaning, groceries shopping and I thought it was a great privilege for me to be able to participate in that. Of course, I have forgotten about it, it was more than thirty years ago, and she passed away. But this summer, because it was so hot, I stopped using the dryer at home, and started hanging up the laundry outside – it was the first time I could do since I was a child. And suddenly, as I was hanging up the laundry, with the dry air, sun, wind and the perfume of flowers and detergent all mixed together it was all there again: I was back with my grand mother hanging laundry on a long wire between the pines in the field adjacent to her house. It was not only a remembrance – I had the sense she was really with me. That I haven't lost her, after all. I think it was a sacramental presence. The way Jesus is present to us as well. Not in person of course, but not just only in our imagination. Jesus is present to us by the means of bread wine in the Eucharist, or in kind words or in the beauty of a summer night, we know he is with us, even if we cannot explain.

So we have this hope. We have this hope that he is with us, that's he is reaching out to us, looking for us, and we have this hope that we are found, each one of us. We are found beyond sin, beyond our ill will, beyond our weakness, disease, forgetfulness. Jesus finds us. We don't have to figure out the way back, from old age, from disease, from death, from all what crushes this world – we just have to trust him to bring us back. Amen.