"Hidden In Plain Sight"
Fourteen Sunday In Ordinary Time 2017

Reflection By: Deacon Paul V. Hursh

"You have hidden these things from the wise and the learned ... you have revealed them to the little ones." (Cf. Matthew 11:25)
What has been revealed is that everything is holy now. We may want to divide the world into the sacred from the profane, the sinner from the saint, but for God – everything belongs.

Everything new and creative in this world puts together things that don't look like they go together at all but always have been connected at a deeper level. Spirituality's goal is to get people to that deeper level, to the unified field or non-dual thinking, where God alone can hold contradictions and paradox. This is not easy to see and for many of us remains hidden in plain sight. How else can the crucifixion of the Christ, be transformed into our greatest grace? Doesn't God's love truly become evident in the recovery of the lost sheep or the return of the prodigal son?

This is the spirituality of imperfection. It is a hopeful sign for us that we don't have to 'get it right' to win God's love. God already loves us and God searches for us especially when we have lost our way and even when we get it very wrong. God doesn't love us because we are good; God loves us because God is good. This is a hard thing to understand and accept because we live in a world where the standard of justice is a system of reward and punishment. In the world, justice is a system where wrong behavior is punished - a punitive system. God seeks our restoration or as we hear in religious circles redemption. God seeks out the lost, forsaken, and the sinner not to punish or expel, but rather to forgive, love, and welcome home.
God's redemptive action towards us not only restores us but also teaches us how, in the name of God, to be agents of restoration for others. Experiencing God's unwarranted forgiveness for our failures makes us more ready to forgive others without judgment. We come to understand that, but for the Grace of God there go I. The humiliation of failure is difficult to experience, but it is often the only thing that can teach us when we see ourselves as the wise and learned. Like St. Paul we may acknowledge, "I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want." (Romans 7:19) Paul comes to know that it is only by the grace of God that he is vindicated when he acknowledges, "God's grace is sufficient for me, for power is made perfect in weakness." I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me. It is through this grace that he has the power to live his call as a wounded healer. (Cf. 2 Corinthians 12:9)

We are all prodigal children of God, this is evident, but we are also called to be the good parent and wounded healer that our world so dearly needs. This is the thing that is hidden until we can become one of the little ones who has experienced the loving redemption of a God who wishes only to restore us to full stature as heirs of God co-heirs of Christ. Full restoration of the world will only come when we all participate in the restorative justice of God. We become these agents of change when we allow ourselves to be embraced by the Father who loves us.