

**HOMILY OUTLINE FOR THE SESQUICENTENNIAL OF  
ST. BONIFACE PARISH  
Edwardsville, Illinois**

**September 15, 2019**

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Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

I. Conversation with locksmith

A. Some people are more prone to lose their keys than others

B. They keep an extra set of house keys and car keys for such customers!

II. In today's Gospel (Luke 15:1-32), Jesus talks about losing things: lost sheep, a lost coin, a lost son.

A. Regarding the lost sheep, Jesus asks, "What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it?"

1. The answer may well be: no one! No one would leave the whole flock to look for one lost sheep.
2. The point is that God does search out the lost individual, which is not what we would expect.
3. Jesus also emphasizes the joy over a lost sinner who repents: "And when he does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance."

- B. Regarding the lost coin, we don't know the value of the coin, but we do know that the woman had only ten of them, so they must have been very valuable to her.
1. She lost one-tenth of her savings!
  2. She too rejoices when she finds it: And when she does find it, she calls together her friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I have found the coin that I lost.' In just the same way, I tell you, there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents."
- C. Regarding the lost son, we should notice three important points: the son repents, the father forgives, and everyone is called to rejoice, even the older son who at first resents the celebration being thrown for his brother: "But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found."
- III. As we celebrate the sesquicentennial of the Catholic community here at St. Boniface Parish, we rejoice that the people who founded this parish 150 years ago found a great prize after having felt lost in various ways.
- A. The year 1869 was just 4 years after the conclusion of the Civil War and the assassination of Illinois' most famous citizen, President Abraham Lincoln.
- B. Perhaps more significantly was what was happening in Europe: in 1869 Otto von Bismarck was Prime Minister of what was then called Prussia. He dominated German and European affairs from the 1860s until 1890, as Chancellor of the German Empire fought a campaign against the Catholic Church known as the *kulturkampf*, or cultural struggle.
- C. Many Catholic Germans fled to the United States, with a large number settling here in central Illinois, where they found the freedom to practice their Catholic faith.

D. So there is indeed great cause for rejoicing today, because 150 years later, we are still benefitting from this great prize that was found here in Edwardsville.

IV. In our Eucharist today, we give thanks for 150 years of blessings here at St. Boniface Parish, but we must also pray for the future.

A. We must pray for our country, the United States of America, where unfortunately some politicians seek to curtail the right of the Church to practice our faith freely.

B. We must also pray for the prodigal sons and daughters of our time who have left the Church, that they may return to the outstretched arms of God, their loving Father, so that we may rejoice with all the angels and saints of heaven upon their return.

May God give us this grace. Amen.