

My first trip to Japan, I was living in a home with a family. Everyone seemed to have their own thing to do - whether going to school, going shopping, going out for a walk, etc.

Part of the culture was that when you came into the house, you announced:

*Tadaima!*

Which pretty much means “*I’m home!*”

For me, that was a bit awkward. In fact, it sort of struck me like I had just walked into a 1960s situation comedy like *Ozzie and Harriet*, or *Leave it to Beaver*, or *I Love Lucy*.

“*Lucy! I’m home!*”

But my host family was insistent that I announce myself every time I came back from where ever I was before, even if I just went out for a short walk. It seemed that there was some unwritten rule that when you returned home, that you needed to make the announcement:

*Tadaima!*

In the first reading, we hear the story of the Israelites wandering in the desert. The short piece we hear today has God informing Moses, who’s been on the mountain with God for 40 days, that the Israelites have made a golden calf and have started worshipping it. Moses intercedes with the God asking for mercy on the Israelites for their idolatry.

In the second reading, St. Paul talks about the mercy that God has shown him in not only redeeming him – after all, he started out as the biggest persecutor of Christians – but in letting him be an apostle.

And in the Gospel, we hear three parables – two short ones: the man who leaves the 99 sheep to go and find the lost one; and the woman who turns her house upside-down to find the one lost coin ... and a long one: the parable of the Prodigal Son.

Halfway through the parable, we hear the words “coming to his senses” ... which in some translations is rendered much more literal to the Greek as, “coming to himself.”

It is at this point that the son realizes all that he has lost – at least all that he has lost financially and materially.

He has repented and is displaying contrition ... but what is called in theological terms, IMPERFECT CONTRITION. He’s not really sorry for what

he's done – he's sorry for what he lost. This is kind of like being sorry for getting caught.

Nonetheless, he goes home, and when confronted by his father he realizes that he's not only lost stuff ... but that he's lost his dignity. And he doesn't realize this because his father berates him or yells at him ... rather he realizes his dignity when his father showers him with LOVE.

At this point, it would seem, that he begins to display PERFECT CONTRITION. That is, he begins to realize that it's not such a big deal that he's lost the inheritance. Rather, it's even worse that he's lost his dignity as a son ... that is he's lost HIMSELF.

In this story, there are two times when the son “comes home” as it were. First he “comes to himself” and then he “comes to his father.”

For us, this can be seen in how sanctifying grace is poured out in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Everybody seems to be OK with just getting halfway there. When someone tells you “I don't have to go to confession, I just tell acknowledge my fault and tell God I'm sorry. That's good enough.”

They're pretty much saying “I've come to myself and I'm happy with imperfect contrition.”

Perfect contrition is only possible through the sanctifying grace of a Sacrament - the Sacrament of Reconciliation ... Confession ... Penance. Whatever you want to call it.

The beauty of the Sacrament is that you CAN approach it with IMPERFECT CONTRITION, and through the outpouring of sacramental grace, your IMPERFECT CONTRITION is made PERFECT.

Today as we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... let us pray for the grace to tap into the sanctifying grace of ALL the sacraments we have received - BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, EUCHARIST, RECONCILIATION, MATRIMONY, HOLY ORDERS, ANOINTING.

Let us “come to ourselves” so that we can “come to the FATHER” and rediscover that we are daughters and sons of God the Father, redeemed ... NOT by ourselves ... but by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ ... and receive the gifts of grace poured out on us by the Holy Spirit.