

An older priest once commented to me that hearing children's confessions was like being pelted with ping pong balls. Last night, our own 2nd graders had their first opportunity to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation. And while I can't necessarily agree with that pastor's assessment, it could be argued that hearing a child's confession isn't that big of a deal. Maybe we should be sending armies of priests into the maximum security facility in Freeland, and go after the "big fish" who *really* need confession?

But in today's Gospel, Our Lord presents two parables - one about a man who leaves his 99 sheep in search of the one lost sheep. And the other about a woman who turns her house upside-down cleaning in order to find one lost coin.

Perhaps the shepherd should consider instead how he lost the one sheep - since in abandoning his flock for the one he may jeopardize the other 99. And the woman might have a hole in her purse that needs to be repaired rather than cleaning her house.

But in the Kingdom of God, nothing is insignificant. One wandering soul, one lost sheep - is worth the entire effort ... because of the value of each person in the eyes of God.

The Pharisees had already written off the 'sinners' with whom Jesus ate. But we are all sinners, and we are all called to repentance - whether our sins are great or small.

Jesus ends his discourse by saying "*there will be rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*"

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray for a spirit of repentance - that we might experience the graces of reconciliation and rejoice with the angels.