

**September 15-16, 2007**  
**Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**Exodus 32:7-14                      First Timothy 1:12-17                      Luke 15:1-32**

A recent newspaper article addressed the disparity in funding for under-achieving students as compared with 'advanced' students. The article lamented a sort of reverse discrimination, that greater attention (and funding) is provided for the underachievers than those who excel in their studies and are more advanced than their grade-level. The article cited that brighter students are left to languish or become bored while attention is lavished on those who struggle to grasp the ideas and topics being presented. Interestingly, the article quoted the concern of parents that the very kids who would be leading/guiding the research and advances of the future were now being held back and treated as pariahs simply because they were too smart. This weekend's Scriptures allude to patience in a variety of forms; God is challenged to find patience when confronted with a disobedient people; Paul acknowledges that God was patient in calling him out of his old ways and finally, in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus uses the image of a patient Father loving BOTH of his sons...as contrasted with one son who thought he should get more. In our 'real world' of haves and have-nots, the idea of being patient with one another can sometimes get lost. Using the concept of funding for education, indeed, both the slow and the bright students should be well-funded...as should those who are simply so-so. Our culture celebrates 'winners', but frequently the winners are those who have stooped or slowed to help the perceived losers and downtrodden. A temptation in our culture is to 'cut our losses' and associate only with winning ideas, to relate only to those who nurture our vision and self-esteem. The Gospel calls us to search for the lost coin or sheep, to not become content with abandoning the slow or the lost...but perhaps realigning the trajectory of what is important so that it sweeps up those who might be lost. There is also the challenge to not become petty when life (God) is generous to those we think unworthy of generosity...it makes us look very small and shallow. But, not everyone is capable of the same tasks and each person's gifts need to be rightly aligned. There is room for those who are 'slow'...their gifts may take time to develop and be appreciated...but there is most certainly room for the bright and advanced...who may have to realize that they are as human as the rest of us.

Here it comes, can you feel the change in the air? In but a few days, Autumn will officially arrive and Summer will officially become an event of memory. You may wish to take time for one last walk on the beach or a picnic at Irvine Park ...or simply a mindful pause before the Autumnal equinox. The change of seasons does not slow us down however, our Autumn Gala Dinner-Dance-Auction is the 29<sup>th</sup>...tickets are available outside at the table. A most-lovely event hosted at SOKA University, this is the social highlight of the autumn season. Please take a Bulletin with you...and as always, as Summer takes a bow and Autumn enters stage-left, remember, you are loved. FKB