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by Pat Marrin

[View Author Profile](#)

patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

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“God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us”
(Rom 5:8).

One hint that the Word of God is not a message but instead a dialogue with the World is its exquisite timeliness to current events. No random selection of Scripture, but a Living Voice addresses us as we try to make sense of the senseless and often self-inflicted tragedies that infuse our headlines with grief and anger.

This time it is heartbreaking image of a young father and his baby daughter drowned trying to swim the Rio Grande River to seek asylum in the United States. The political battle over immigration is shamed by a child clinging to her father, both face-down in the waters of their failed exodus to the Promised Land that would not accommodate them.

The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus arrives on the liturgical calendar to inform our thoughts about the power of unconditional love. A feast of texts from Ezekiel, Romans and Matthew frames our questions about God’s limitless love for his people, Christ’s death to save us while we were still sinners, and his challenge to his own generation about being good shepherds, especially for the lost and the least of our brothers and sisters.

God goes after the one in a hundred that is lost, retrieves it and carries it home on his shoulders to celebrate its redemption. That one prodigal is worth more than the 99 who have no need of mercy. It is a standard that exceeds the logic of every

measure of worth. Precious in the eyes of the Lord are the lives of his little ones.

Can we listen to the Word, a two-edged sword that cuts through the rhetoric and obfuscation to first indict us and then offer us a path forward to live our much flaunted ideals as a “nation of immigrants, the land of the free and the home of the brave”? What will it take to redeem the soul of America as it struggles to confront its past sins and its present contradictions?

God leads with mercy for sinners. Can we respond with repentance and a change of heart?

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