

2 Sunday Advent 2016
Dec 3/4
Frazee/Callaway

There is a wedding custom in Mexico and even in some parts of the United States that involves tying the couple together. The lazo, or lasso, is a double looped cord. One loop is placed over the shoulders of the groom and the other over the shoulder of the bride. The two of them are tied together for life.

It is a strong symbol, especially in a culture that believes marriage to be for convenience or until personal pleasure fades. If our culture were planning a wedding, after the vows the bride and the groom would be handed scissors, just in case the ties that bind them together begin to constrict selfish pursuits and stifle personal expression.

If this were the template for God's commitment to us, God would have moved on a long time ago. With a blink of God's eye, the human family would be only a divine memory, and not a happy one at that. We are filled with rebellion. We fail at repentance. We have spurts of faithfulness, and then we fall back into old sins or find new ones. All the while, God remains tied to us, not out of obligation, but out of pure love.

After breaking covenant after covenant, God sent his son, born of Mary, Jesus, protected by Joseph, hailed by shepherds and honored by magi. In Christ Jesus, God has taken on a new bond of love that is so tight that it can never be undone.

When it comes to faithfulness, we are like Harry Houdini. He was an American illusionist and stunt performer, noted for his sensational escape acts. We believe that we are clever enough to slip out of the grasp of God. Without letting go, God does let us go. Prodigal children have filled the streets seeking on their own what will never fill their belly or their empty hearts.

God has taken on a new bond of love. A love that calls us to turn back to both baby Jesus and Jesus Christ, who suffered and died for us. We hear the invitation, *trust in my forgiveness alone.*