

**TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
YEAR C September 25, 2013**

THEME: Rocka My Soul

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**Rocka my soul in the bosom of Abraham,
Rocka my soul in the bosom of Abraham,
Rocka my soul in the bosom of Abraham,
O rocka my soul.**

**So wide you can over it,
So wide you can over it,
So wide you can over it,
O rocka my soul.**

As with so many of the African American spirituals the origins of this classic song are buried in the sorrows and hopes of slaves who heard the stories of Jesus and made them their own.

No doubt, however, some slave or group of slaves heard today's parable and was moved to the soul.

Our rich masters live comfortably in their big houses and eat fine meals every day.

While we work hard, separated from our families and children.

But, according to Jesus story, there will be a time, when we will rest in the bosom of father Abraham and the old master will be across that big old divide no one can get around or over or under.

And that old master will not be able to send us like his beholden slave to get him a drip of water nor to warn his brothers nor to do nothing else for him because our days of being his slave will be over.

Rocka my soul in the bosom of Abraham.

So who today, in our world, might be singing this old song?

Perhaps the 20 year old woman with the year old baby.

She knows now she made a terrible mistake dropping out of high school and getting involved with the baby's father.

He's long gone and her baby is here with her.

She tries to work, usually at a fast food place and usually for 20 or 25 hours a week but finding someone to take care of the baby is always a hassle and expensive.

If the baby gets sick she sometimes misses work and the bosses get mad and she has sometimes lost her job – she's trying but it so hard and she get so tired.

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He knows he has PTSD – post traumatic stress disorder; he knew it before he was diagnosed at the Veterans hospital.

He served two tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan.

He saw some really bad stuff.

When he first came home and he saw his family and got together with his friends it seemed like everything was going to be fine.

Pretty soon he knew it wasn't: he was different inside; everythings looked different to him now.

He wasn't sleeping or when he did his dreams were back there, in Iraq or Afghanistan, the people and places there.

The headaches started coming; the impatience until he wanted to jump out of his skin; he started spending more and more time by himself, even hiding from the people who meant the most to him.

Alcohol and drugs seemed to be the only way to really escape.

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He had just turned sixty.

And he was actually in pretty good health – a few aches and pains, nothing major; so was his wife.

The children were all grown and on their own.

Life was good.

Then one Friday morning he arrived at his job at an engineering firm where he had worked for 23 years and his boss asked to see him.

The boss said the company was merging with another firm and reorganizing.

His position had been eliminated.

He was being given a generous severance and of course his pension but today would be his last day of work.

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They were three, ages 4, 6 and 10; the two youngest were girls, the oldest a boy.

They all went to school all the time; that was a family priority mostly because dad had not been able to go to school.

Dad was somewhat mentally handicapped and did not do well in school so he dropped out and never finished high school.

Now he could never get a very good paying job; in fact he almost always worked two jobs to try and take care of his family.

Mom worked too, at a grocery store, and between the two of them and a little bit of help from Food Stamps and sometimes the Food Bank it was still hard to make enough for the family.

**So wide you can over it,
So wide you can over it,
So wide you can over it,
O rocka my soul.**