

LENT 2021: Our Hope Renewed

4th Sunday of Lent



*“Yes, God loves the world so much that
he gave his only Son”*

Opening Prayer

Lord, on this 4th Sunday in Lent,

Let us be aware of your love and compassion for us.

You sent your Son Christ Jesus to us who reconciles us to you.

Teach us to follow the example he gave us.

May our faith, hope and charity turn hatred to love, conflict to peace and death to eternal life. Amen

Readings for the Fourth Sunday of Lent - Year B

First Reading: 2 Chronicles 36: 14-17, 19-23

Psalm: Psalm 136(137): 1-6

Second Reading: Ephesians 2: 4-19

Gospel Reading: John 3: 14-21

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him might not perish
but might have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world,
but that the world might be saved through him.

Whoever believes in him will not be condemned,
but whoever does not believe has already been condemned,
because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

And this is the verdict,
that the light came into the world,
but people preferred darkness to light,
because their works were evil.

For everyone who does wicked things hates the light
and does not come toward the light,
so that his works might not be exposed.

But whoever lives the truth comes to the light,
so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

Lectio Divina

Reading

Take your time and read the passage. Get a sense of what it is saying. Read the passage a second time. Listen for any words or phrases that strike you, and listen in your heart. Be attentive to detail. Note versus or phrases that stand out to you. Where to understand meaning and background.

In this passage... My favourite verse was... I noticed...

Reflecting

Read the passage again, slowly. As you pause on the words or phrases that strike you, take time to consider what the word, phrase, or passage means, particularly its connection to your life. Imagine being present to hear the passage or witness the story.

This reminds me of... If I were there... I can connect this story to...

Responding

Read the passage again, slowly. Consider now how God has spoken to you in this passage and respond back to him. You may want to consider how this passage is asking you to act differently. Thank God for his word. Ask him to lead you into deeper understanding.

Dear Jesus... Thank you God for... Please help me understand...

Remaining

Now take some time to simply remain in the presence of God. Quiet expression of love between you and God. Note what God is trying to teach you through the passage and time of prayer.

I think Jesus is teaching me... Lord, I love you for... I believe...

Reflection

In our gospel today, it relates the story of the teacher Nicodemus who comes secretly to Jesus to discuss his teachings and to probe the master on his belief in God. He comes at night, in the darkness, to sit in the presence of the light of the world. At the time of Jesus, those in charge of the religious and social laws of the Jewish people were the Scribes and the Pharisees. Their belief in God had been reduced to rules, Laws and regulations. Anyone who would not abide by these

rules and regulations were not allowed in the Temples and synagogues i.e. those who were sick, poor, widows and tax collectors. Yet, these were the people with whom Jesus spoke. Nicodemus was a Pharisee. He came in the darkness as he did not want others to know that he was a follower of Jesus. Nicodemus has a set idea of who God was. However, Jesus reveals a different image of God. One that Nicodemus can't even begin to understand or imagine. The God of the Pharisees tended to be angry and judgemental and condemn his people. The God of Jesus is a God who loves us. Who does not punish us. But wants a deep personal relationship with us. The God of Jesus is one who does not destroy but lifts us up. God loves us so much that he sent his Son Jesus so that we may not be lost but found, not condemned but be saved, and may have eternal life.

Having faith and being a follower in Jesus is not just about following rules and regulations. But about following a person; Jesus Christ. God sends his words through Jesus to open our minds and our hearts to him. Sometimes we act in the same way as Nicodemus, we hide in the darkness and in the shadows. Hiding our doubts and our faith. But in this gospel we are asked to be courageous in our faith, to be more public about our commitment to the light, the truth and the common good to others.

Just as Jesus invited Nicodemus out of the dark and into the light, he is asking us to do the same. As we take another step on our Lenten journey, we are the people of light, not of darkness. We are the people who are on a journey with Jesus to the cross and crucifixion. As Jesus asks us to walk with him to the cross, he also invites us to share in his resurrection.

So on this fourth Sunday of lent let us be reminded that God loves us, not to be in darkness but in the light. Therefore, let us trust in Him, so that we may have eternal life with him.

- What is Jesus saying to me in this scripture passage?
- Where in my life do I have darkness?
- Are you aware of the light of Christ in your life? Will you open my mind and heart to him?
- What brings joy into my life?

Closing Prayer

Lord, we thank you for this journey that we are making during lent. For many years you were calling us, inviting us to look at ourselves through your eyes. We are brought back to look at ourselves and come into the light; Feeling inner peace because we know that what we are doing we are doing with you. Let your grace flow through us and help us to surrender our cares and concerns, Knowing that you will never leave or forsake us. Amen.