

REFLECTION FOR 4TH SUNDAY YEAR B

2Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23; Ephesians 2:4-10 John 3:14-21

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is called *Lætare* (Rejoice) Sunday. Since this Sunday occurs in the middle of Lent, the Church's joy is in anticipation of the Resurrection of Our Lord.

The central theme of today's readings is that our salvation is the free gift of a merciful God, given to us through Jesus, His Son. The readings stress God's mercy and compassion and remind us of the great love, kindness, and grace extended to us in Christ.

As we continue our Lenten observance for the fourth week, the Sacred Liturgy invites us to enter more deeply into the mystery of God's grace, mercy, and salvation.

In the first reading, taken from the Second Book of Chronicles, we learn the compassion and patience of God. God chose Cyrus the Great, a pagan conqueror, to become the instrument of His mercy and salvation for His chosen people exiled in Babylon.

In the second reading, Paul tells us that God is so rich in mercy that He has granted us eternal salvation and eternal life as a free gift through Christ Jesus.

God did not send Jesus into the world to speak angry words of condemnation to we disobedient children of God, but to save us.

Jesus reveals God's truth, a truth which we might summarise as God saying to us: I love you and since I love you, I will tell you the truth. If you receive that truth and act on it, you can experience new birth to eternal life – salvation.

Through Jesus, our heavenly Father tells us: I love you, I love you enough to tell you the truth. I love you enough to help you experience a fresh start, healing, forgiveness and eternal life.

Why this offer from God? Because God loves us so much. Love is the very identity of God. God is love.

We need to reciprocate God's love by loving others. God's love is unconditional, universal, forgiving, and merciful. Let us try, with His help, to make an earnest attempt to include these qualities as we share our love with others during Lent, for in them, we love and serve Him.

Our rebirth by water and the Spirit must be an ongoing process. As Christians, we are meant to lead a life of repentance and on-going conversion, bringing us to a renewal of life with the help of the Holy Spirit living within us. The renewal of the Spirit comes when we work with Him to be liberated from the bondage of evil habits by using the Divine strength we receive from Him through prayer, Bible reading and frequenting the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist.

Let us be bearers of Jesus' Light and carry it to other people. When we allow the Light of God's forgiveness to shine in our lives, it brightens up every corner, forgives every sin, restores our relationship with God, and renews our lives.

Whoever follows Jesus will not walk in darkness. We will experience the joy and peace of sins forgiven, of new attitudes and of new relationships with God, family and friends.

Jesus' Light of truth, justice, holiness, and charity shining in our lives is meant to bring blessing to others. We are to let this Light of Christ shine through us into the lives of the people around us. The Light we give to others can dispel the darkness of their lives and bring them to a completely new outlook. Let us not underestimate what the Light of Christ can do through us. As Jesus said: *"You are the light of the world.... your light must shine before people so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in Heaven"* (Mt. 5:14, 16).

HAPPY MOTHERS DAY

A lesson I learnt early as a priest was that you take your life in your hands if you don't mention mothers on mothering Sunday.

Motherhood is a high calling.

Mothers will do anything, brave anything, suffer anything, endure anything for the sake of their children.

✚Blessed are mothers who lost sleep when we were sick – they shall find rest.

✚Blessed are mothers who taught us the Christian faith by the example of their life – they shall share God's kingdom.

✚Blessed are mothers who comforted us in difficult times – they shall be comforted.

✚Blessed are mothers who taught us right from wrong and life of integrity – they shall know peace.

✚Blessed are mothers who taught us the importance of love of God and love of neighbour – they shall see God.

Mothers, may the Lord give you peace, may He be gracious to you and bless you. Amen

Fr Patrick