

Fourth Sunday Lent Cycle Year B

Gifted by God if we but see!



'Yes it is the Fourth Sunday already!' I hear you say. A time to look back, but just a glance, always with a forward movement towards the light of Easter just around the corner. This Sunday is a milestone. How are we doing? Are we getting there? Today's Readings are a reminder and a challenge to us to step aside, ponder and reflect on a marvelous gift freely given, the gift of Salvation and Reconciliation; the Gift of God's Mercy and Grace. What a combination!

There was a newspaper headline recently declaring 'He's lost the run of himself', referring to one of our Northern Politicians. Indeed this can be applied to ourselves as the demands of life and ministry wear us down and perhaps take their toll. We can lose sight; get caught up in many issues, causes and concerns both at a personal, local, and global level. Now is the time to gather ourselves and re

focus in order to see what is real and true.

The great danger for all of us is at times, not the falling away from Grace, but the taking for granted of all things Spiritual. Familiar texts, familiar words ring out today.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him may not die but may have eternal life."

Is this true? God's faithful Love and Mercy is it real? If only we could see! Here is our chance to be restored, renewed, and reconciled, to lead and share with a world waiting for what is good. God is rich in Mercy; He brought us to life in Christ when we were dead. The image of light and shadow / darkness is played out in the encounter of Jesus with Nicodemus. He is wavering between the light and the darkness in the shadows uncertain of his choices and decisions. John 3:14-21
We have the same choices:

Darkness – evil

Light - goodness

As these words are written many atrocities are being committed throughout the world far away, and at home here on my doorstep with the recent killings at an Army Base in Co. Antrim.

Have these people lost the run of themselves? We know the old saying that "evil triumphs when good people do nothing".

But it is not clear cut, there is many a struggle in between.

Now is the time for Light! Where do we stand?

We are called to live in the Light, to be committed to Truth, Justice, Peace and Reconciliation. Today is also known as Laetare Sunday, the day of rejoicing, the point in Lent when we turn more deliberately into the light. The forces arrayed against Jesus become clearer, and Jesus' way of light and truth is delineated in opposition to all those who live with infidelity and worship idols. It is a Sunday of warning and a call to look with eyes wide open at the reality of evil and the cross of Christ.

It is the joy mingled with a certain amount of sadness, but we are sons and daughters of God and that is the source of our joy, as Leon Bloy says "True joy is suffering overcome."

This was the day the priest wore rose coloured vestments. Flowers appeared on the altar and music was played. A day of encouragement as the journey continues to the Great Week, Holy Week and the ultimate Celebration of Easter.

May the road rise to meet us.

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