

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR B 2021

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is called *Laetare(rejoice)* Sunday; one of rejoicing symbolizing the Church's joy in anticipation of the Resurrection of Our Lord. The theme to reflect on from today's readings is that Jesus as light of the world, came to save us from the darkness of sin and death. Hence, we rejoice because God's love, mercy and compassion are extended to us freely in Christ.

In the first reading, the people of God preferred to live in darkness because it provided them with an easier and more seductive life style. Even when God sent them messengers, they rejected them because they didn't want to change, to grow or to face their wickedness. They chose their easier ways over God's ways. They were sent to exile. However, even though they were punished, God did not completely abandon them but rescued them using Cyrus, king of Persia.

In the second reading, St. 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. Although we don't deserve anything from God on our own, God chose to love us, to save us and to give us life - both Jews and Gentiles alike - because of His great love and mercy.

In today's Gospel Jesus the Son of God, became the agent of God's love and salvation, not just for one sinful nation Israel but for the sinfulness of the whole world. John 3:16, reminds us that God expressed His love, mercy and compassion for us all by giving His only Son for our salvation.

When Nicodemus came to Jesus, it was at night under the cover of darkness. Even though he wanted to meet Jesus whose signs and miracles he had heard of, he could not yet fully step into the light because he had not yet chosen God's ways over the life of his fellow Pharisees. Jesus points out to him that the light Himself came into the world but people preferred darkness because their works were evil. They preferred their easier, quicker, and more seductive evil ways. Not very different from today since many people don't want to hear anything relating to the cross.

We all know that evil thrives in the dark that's why a lot of people who do evil things prefer the dark because light exposes their evil deeds. However, due to the darkness of sin, we were never going to find our way back to God without some help and so He sent His only Son Jesus as the light of the world not to condemn us but to save us. Hence, we hear at Christmas celebrating His coming: *"a people who walked in darkness, have now seen a great light..."* Jesus' light is the only one that can fully dispel the darkness of sin.

Jesus warns us today that our eternal destiny will be determined by how we are reacting to His guiding light. The question to ask ourselves is whether we are walking in the light of Jesus' love? Or are we afraid of what it might reveal in the dark corners of our lives which we try to keep hidden? Christ is inviting us all to come into the bright light of His love. There we shall be safe here on earth as we prepare to rejoice with Him in eternity.

Let us also become bearers of Christ's light to other people. When we allow the light of God's forgiveness to shine in our lives, it brightens up every corner, forgives our every sin, restores our relationship with God and with neighbor and renews our lives. When we follow Jesus, we will not walk in darkness. We will experience the joy and peace of sins forgiven, of new attitudes and of new relationships with family and friends. Jesus' light of truth, justice, holiness and charity shining in our lives will bring blessings to others. May we let this light of Christ shine through us into the lives of the people around us.

Today we are all invited to say yes to God's love which brought us salvation through the cross of Christ. This will allow us to walk in His light. May we pray for the grace to continue rejoicing

throughout the remaining season of Lent as we prepare to celebrate the passion, death and resurrection of Christ which led to our salvation. Amen.