

Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year B • Psalter Week 4



THE GOSPEL IN A NUTSHELL

(JOHN 3:14-21)

In the Fourth Gospel (John), Jesus encounters individuals who represent a specific type of person. Nicodemus is a Jewish scholar who is literally and metaphorically in the dark about Jesus. He is an honest individual, one with well-formed beliefs, whose attitude to Jesus is positive, but limited by his own understanding of God.

He is impressed by the signs that Jesus has worked, but these do not, and cannot, bring him to a true appreciation of who Jesus really is. He seems to want to fit Jesus into his present system of belief, but Jesus challenges him to expand his vision beyond a narrowly Jewish way of thinking to one which is universal.

Jesus appeals to their common Jewish heritage by invoking the memory of Moses fashioning the bronze serpent and curing the Israelites who had been bitten by snakes as punishment for their complaining during the Exodus journey through the wilderness. By a play on the verb "to lift up", he presents his own being exalted on the cross as a similar healing for all those who will look at him and believe. Jesus speaks of this concern of God as being due to God's love for the world, that is, for all human beings. It is on the response which the person makes to the revealing of God's self in Jesus that judgement depends: it is not an act of God, but the result of the decision which each person makes for themselves which determines whether a person is condemned or not. Judgement is in the here and now, based on whether we accept or reject Jesus and his message. ■

LEARN

In the Gospel according to John, the crucifixion is "the exaltation" ("lifting up") of Jesus as king and priest.

Light and darkness/night are symbols of belief and unbelief in the Fourth Gospel.

Judgement in John is the decision the person makes to accept or reject Jesus and his message: it is something which the individual does, not an external, divine action.

SAY

The Son of Man must be lifted up... so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.
(John 3:14-15)

REFLECT

Nicodemus is an interesting character. We first encounter him as a furtive figure, coming to Jesus under the cover of darkness: later he speaks up against the religious authorities' attempt to convict Jesus without giving him the benefit of due legal process; finally, he emerges as a courageous person, risking his reputation, and perhaps more, to bury the body of the crucified Jesus. We can see in him an example of developing faith and commitment.

It is in this dialogue between Jesus and the Jewish scholar that we find perhaps the most concise summary of the Christian faith. Sometimes, we can see displayed at sporting events posters proclaiming "John 3:16": this is the four-line verse which says: "God loved the world so much/ that he gave his only Son,/ so that whoever believes in him may not be lost/ but may have eternal life." Some people have said that if we were to lose the whole of the Christian scriptures except for this one verse, then we would still have the essence of the Gospel.

Nicodemus sincerely believed in the teachings he had received: Jesus did not tell him that he was wrong, but encouraged him to think more deeply about how God viewed the world, not just Nicodemus' part of it. Perhaps we might put ourselves in Nicodemus' shoes and broaden our understanding of Jesus and his message as well. ■

DO

Memorise the text of John 3:16, given in the "Reflect" section.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her.
Be joyful, all who were in mourning;
exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.**

COLLECT

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING 2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23

A reading from the second book of Chronicles.

All the heads of the priesthood, and the people too, added infidelity to infidelity, copying all the shameful practices of the nations and defiling the Temple that the Lord had consecrated for himself in Jerusalem. The Lord, the God of their ancestors, tirelessly sent messenger after messenger, since he wished to spare his people and his house. But they ridiculed the messengers of God, they despised his words, they laughed at his prophets, until at last the wrath of the Lord rose so high against his people that there was no further remedy.

Their enemies burned down the Temple of God, demolished the walls of Jerusalem, set fire to all its palaces, and destroyed everything of value in it. The survivors were deported by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon; they were to serve him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. This is how the word of the Lord was fulfilled that he spoke through Jeremiah, "Until this land has enjoyed its sabbath rest, until seventy years have gone by, it will keep sabbath throughout the days of its desolation."

And in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, to fulfil the word of the Lord that was spoken through Jeremiah, the Lord roused the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia to issue a proclamation and to have it publicly displayed throughout his kingdom: "Thus speaks Cyrus king of Persia, 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; he has ordered me to build him a Temple in Jerusalem, in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, may his God be with him! Let him go up.'"

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 136

Response:

**O let my tongue
cleave to my mouth
if I remember you not!**

1. By the rivers of Babylon there we sat and wept, remembering Zion: on the poplars that grew there we hung up our harps. (R.)
2. For it was there that they asked us, our captors, for songs, our oppressors, for joy.

"Sing to us," they said,
"one of Zion's songs." (R.)

3. O how could we sing the song of the Lord on alien soil? If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! (R.)
4. O let my tongue cleave to my mouth if I remember you not, if I prize not Jerusalem above all my joys! (R.)

SECOND READING Ephesians 2:4-10

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians.

God loved us with so much love that he was generous with his mercy: when we were dead through our sins, he brought us to life with Christ – it is through grace that you have been saved – and raised us up with him and gave us a place with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus.

This was to show for all ages to come, through his goodness towards us in Christ Jesus, how infinitely rich he is in grace. Because it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God; not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Glorry and praise to you, O Christ!
God loved the world so much that he gave
his only Son;
everyone who believes in him has eternal life.
Glorry and praise to you, O Christ!**

GOSPEL

John 3:14-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

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

Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved.

No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God's only Son. On these grounds is sentence pronounced: that though the light has come into the world men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, for fear his actions should be exposed;

but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
(all bow during the next two lines)**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

We place before you with joy these offerings, which bring eternal remedy, O Lord, praying that we may both faithfully revere them and present them to you, as is fitting, for the salvation of all the world. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

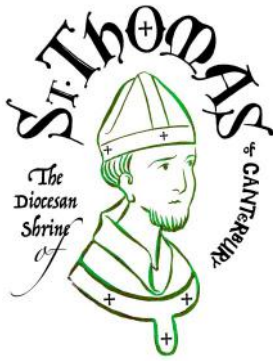
COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Jerusalem is built as a city bonded as one
together.
It is there that the tribes go up, the tribes of
the Lord,
to praise the name of the Lord.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world, illuminate our hearts, we pray, with the splendour of your grace, that we may always ponder what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty and love you in all sincerity. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

NEWSLETTER



CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

59 Burgate Canterbury Kent CT1 2HJ

Telephone: 01227 462896 Email: canterbury@rcaos.org.uk

Web Site: <https://stthomasofcanterbury.com> St Thomas of Canterbury

Parish Priest: Canon Anthony Charlton email: anthonycharlton@rcaos.org.uk

Assistant Priest: Fr John Howard

email: johnhoward@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Administrator: Miss Linda Scott

St Thomas' Shop (01227 462896): OPEN SUNDAYS FROM AFTER 9.30 MASS UNTIL 12 NOON

University of Kent Chaplaincy: Fr Tom Herbst (01843 230 774) email: tjherbst@gmail.com

St Thomas' Catholic Primary School: Head Teacher: Miss Lisa D'Agostini (01227 462539)

St Anselm's Catholic Secondary School: Exec Prin: Mr M Walters; Academy Prin: Mr J Rowarth (01227 826200)

The Parish Office is Closed & Linda is working from home. Linda can access emails via the church email so please contact her this way initially.

ALL MASSES ARE LIVESTREAMED

6.00pm (Vigil): for Parish Helpers (*Angela Nichols*)

Sunday 14th Mar: 4th Sun of Lent (Laetare Sun) Jn3:14-21

8.00am: People of the Parish

9.30am: Welfare of Ellen Reynolds (*Mary Reynolds*)

11.00am: Thanksgiving (*Martina Clark*)

12.15: *Baptism of Jahzaya and Jahzara Olowu-morson*

3.00 pm: *Stations of the Cross*

6.00 pm: Brown Family

RCIA: *Second Scrutiny*

Monday 15th Mar: Feria

Jn 4: 43-54

7.30 am: John Todd - RIP (*Jenny Todd*)

10.30am: *Church open for private prayer & adoration*

12 noon: Frances & Michael-Joe Keavney (*Mary & Geraldine*)

6.00 pm Live streamed Prayer

Tuesday 16th Mar: Feria

Jn 5: 1-16

10.30am: *Church open for private prayer and adoration*

12 noon: In Thanksgiving (*Nora King*)

6.00 pm Live-streamed Prayer

Wednesday 17th Mar: St Patrick

Jn 5: 17-30

7.30 am: Patrick, Con & Sean Lyons - RIP & Jim, Mary & Teresa Kelly - RIP (*Bernadette Lyons*)

10.30am: *Church open for private prayer and adoration*

10.30am: Reconciliation

12 noon: In Thanksgiving (*Ashman & Allen Families*)

6.00 pm Live streamed Prayer

Thursday 18th Mar: Feria

Jn 5: 31-47

7.30am: Brendan Chima Ugwuonuoha - RIP(Ugwuonuoha Fam)

10.30am: *Church open for private prayer and adoration*

12 noon: Cyril Hardy - RIP (*George & Frances Cockayne*)

6.00 pm Live streamed Prayer

7.30 - 8.30pm: *Adoration for Young Adults with Fr John*

Friday 19th Mar: St Joseph Mt 1:16,18-21,24 or Lk2:41-51

10.30am: *Church open for private prayer and adoration*

12 noon: Thanksgiving to St Joseph on Feast of St Joseph

1 - 3 pm: *Church open for private prayer and adoration*

6.00 pm Live streamed Prayer

7.30pm: For Darlene Letey's intentions

Saturday 20th Mar: Feria

Jn 7: 40-52

10.30am: Reconciliation

10.30am: *Church open for private prayer and adoration*

12 noon: Ricci Steel - RIP (*Phyllis Steel*)

6pm (Vigil): F Robert (Bob) Pugh - RIP (Erica & Tony Grace)

Sunday 21st Mar: 5th Sunday of Lent Jn 12: 20-33

8.00am: Pam Dodds - RIP (1st Anniv.) (*Roberta Johnson*)

9.30am: Brendan Ugwuonuoha & Verol Mere - RIP (*Family*)

11.00am: Welfare of Roy Olesn (*Martina Clark*)

12.15: *Baptism of Milo Kohut*

3.00 pm: *Stations of the Cross*

6.00 pm: People of the Parish

RCIA: *Third Scrutiny*

PARISH MATTERS

Please remember in your prayers:

Marie Strong, Angeline Frizell, Alan Skeet, Louisa Ward, Janette Hughes, Barbara Brett, Mary Dittrich, Pat Gibson, Jenni Aldridge, Mary Reynolds, Brian Wicker, Joan Sutton, Audrey Martin, Elizabeth Gilhenny, Bill Parker, Lucy Purbrick, Josie Carr, Simon Lam, Sr Anne Bross (formerly of our parish), Pippa Swan, Fr John Slater, Jennifer Lang, Pauline Lilford, Barbara Markham, Patricia Gray, Patrick Sellars, Fr Kevin Alban O.Carm, Sr Margaret McGrath, Angela Nichols, Jean Boyce

Please pray for the repose of the souls of:

Carol Mary Kidby, Anna Hesketh, Tom Hodges, Rebecca Judge, Gertraude Katherine Brock, Vera Fletcher, Maria Daniels, Maria Prado, Hannelore Hall, Bernie Fisher, Joseph McKee, Tony Kenny, Michael Jones, Douglas Ricketts, Maurice Crosland, Patricia Collins, Andrzej Czupkowski, Chris Bateman, Pia Iannacci, Antonio Iannacci, Ellen Fitzgerald, Anna Koeller, Fr Michael Gwinnell, Ann Sexton, Paulina Manfredini, Fr Michael Boland, Fr George Webster, Theresa Ramsundar, Canon Frank O'Sullivan, Margaret Willis, Rev Paul Saunders, Sylvia Guy, Pat Gill, Baby Layla Green and Paul Card

Please pray for those whose 1st anniversaries are this month:

Danielle Rosher, Maria Bryant, Roberto di Paco & Pam Dodds

SECOND COLLECTIONS: Our retiring collections:

This weekend: 13/14 Mar: No second collection

Next weekend: 20/21 Mar: Second Collection for SVP

GIFT AID ENVELOPES: These will be available after all Masses **this weekend, 13/14 March** in the **All Saints Chapel**. Please take your box. If you have any questions or concerns, please email the parish office on canterbury@rcaos.org.uk. Thank you

Church Shop Fundraise Weekend 20/21 March 2021

The Church Shop has been closed for most of the last 12 months. We are updating the stock we currently have. Please help us achieve this by supporting our table-top fundraise weekend.

After all Masses goods will be on display in the Saint's Chapel.

You are asked to donate in the Honesty Bucket or our contactless machines that will be there. Some prices will be shown - others will be for your generosity!

Our shop is unique in Canterbury - in what you can buy and as a sign of our Christian presence. Thank you and God bless.

The Shop Volunteer Team

From Fr Anthony ...

This is the Fourth Sunday of the Lenten season and is known as Laetare Sunday. This is because the entrance antiphon from Isaiah reads:

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her.
Be joyful, all who were in mourning;
exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

Laetare is the first word — meaning “rejoice” — in the Latin text. On Laetare Sunday the Church expresses hope and joy in the midst of our Lenten fasts and penances. The priest can wear pink or rose vestments. This change in colour indicates a glimpse of the joy that awaits us at Easter, just before we enter into the somber days of Passiontide. As one writer put it, Laetare Sunday is the Church’s way of giving us a “shot in the arm” as we approach the darkness and horror of the days through Good Friday and Holy Saturday. It’s an opportunity to savour and keep in the back of our minds what awaits us on Easter Sunday — the reality. I know that for many of us we have been struggling with our Lenten prayer and penance. If this is true of you don’t feel guilty just rejoice and begin again tomorrow.

This Sunday is also kept as Mothering Sunday. In times past it was considered important for people to return to their home or ‘mother’ church once a year. So each year in the middle of Lent, everyone would visit their ‘mother’ church - the main church or cathedral of the area.

Inevitably the return to the ‘mother’ church became an occasion for family reunions when children who were working away returned home. It was quite common in those days for children to leave home for work once they were ten years old. Most historians think that it was the return to the ‘Mother’ church which led to the tradition of children, particularly those working as domestic servants or as apprentices, being given the day off to visit their mother and family. We pray today for all mothers. We give thanks for their self sacrifice and love and we ask that those who struggle may be strengthened through the prayers of Mary our Mother and the Mother of the Lord.

Also this Sunday at the evening Mass we are having the second Scrutiny as part of a preparation for those who are to be baptised. The scrutinies are solemnly celebrated on the 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of Lent and are reinforced by an exorcism. They are rites for self-searching and repentance and have, above all, a spiritual purpose. The scrutinies are meant to uncover, and then heal, all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of those who are to be baptised at Easter, to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright, strong, and good. The scrutinies are celebrated in order to deliver the elect from the power of sin and Satan, to protect them against temptation and to give them strength in Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. These rites therefore should complete the conversion of the elect and deepen their resolve to hold fast to Christ and to carry out their decision to love God above all. When we have the second scrutiny we use the gospel for year A, the story of the man born blind. Here is the prayer that is said over those who are to be baptised at Easter. This prayer we can apply to ourselves as well.

Lord Jesus,
you are the true light that enlightens the world.
Through your Spirit of truth
free those who are enslaved by the father of lies.
Stir up the desire for good in these elect, whom you have chosen for your sacraments.
Let them rejoice in your light, that they may see,
and, like the man born blind whose sight you restored,
let them prove to be staunch and fearless witnesses to the faith,
for you are Lord for ever and ever.

This a great prayer that we can apply to ourselves as well.

A message from our East Kent Catholic Secondary Schools.

As a community, during Lent, we are supporting Cafod and ‘Walking For Water’ so families like Abdella’s don’t have to. Some of our staff & students are Walking/Hopping/Skipping / Cycling/Dancing/Chairdancing/DogWalking and even taking Cafod’s ‘10,000 Steps Everyday in Lent challenge’. Find out why we are Walking For Water this Lent, here <https://cafod.org.uk/Education/School-fundraising/Water-Droplet-Trail> If you would like to support us in raising money for Cafod’s Walk For Water, please go to our JustGiving Page here: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/ursuline-college-st-edmund-s-st-anselm-s-catholic-schools?newPage=True> Thank you for your support.
#WalkingTogetherThrough Lent 2021 #WalkForWater

THE BIBLE TIMELINE COURSE

Understand the Bible from start to finish, the Old and New Testament, with this **FREE OF CHARGE**, worldwide-famous course delivered online LIVE by Mauro Iannicelli. Starts on **7th April 2021** at 7pm (Eight Wednesday evening sessions). Info & Registration: www.comeandsee.org

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Every Sunday during Lent:
14 March at 3.00pm; 21 March at 3.00 pm; 28 March at 3.00pm

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY:

Monday, 29 March - Parish Reconciliation Service at 7.30pm

Get our Parish Newsletter emailed directly to you by subscribing at stthomasofcanterbury.com/newsletters/ This weekly eNewsletter also shares additional information from around the Parish.