

MARCH 14, 2021
Sunday of the 4th Week of Lent
John 3: 14-21

“FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD.”

“Late in the afternoon, a teenager sneaks into a back pew. He drops his backpack, unplugs his i-Pod and stuffs of his basketball behind the kneeler. His aloofness and moodiness mask his feelings of being overwhelmed by living in that strange land between childhood and adulthood, trying to meet the expectations of teachers to be a scholar, his coaches to be champion, and his classmates to be cool. In the quiet darkness, he sits and prays simply, “Lord, it’s me, Joe . . .” In another part of the church, an exhausted businessman sinks into a seat. It has been a horrible day — he had to let five people go in his small agency. He had no choice: business is drying up. He did everything he could to keep them on; he offered severance pay and extended benefits; still, he feels like the worst person who ever lived. In the nightmare he is struggling through, he prays, “God, help me keep it together.” And in front of the statue of the Mother of God, a woman sits fingering her rosary. The Aves fall silently from her lips — but her thoughts are elsewhere: another confrontation with her daughter, the illness of her mother, the growing distance between her and husband. She stops her beads, sinks to the floor and cries, “Lord, I’m not sure I can go on.”¹

This is what felt by Nicodemus: exhausted, fearful, confused, overwhelmed that’s why he approached Jesus in the darkness of the night. He wanted comfort, solace, peace, and hope to his troubling hearts and life. And we see he was not disappointed; Jesus gave him assuring direction and consolation. Jesus assured Nicodemus of the purpose of the gospel He proclaimed and the love of God to all who embraced the will of the Father and be born-again. Jesus gave Nicodemus and now to us, the greatest love of God the Father

¹ www.stories4homilies.co

as Jesus said: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”² What a beautiful assurance from Jesus! God loves us so much and God don’t want us to be separated from Him even giving His Only Begotten Son for us to come back to Him, be saved and be with Him for ever.

My brothers and sisters, Jesus is encouraging and always asking us to see things in a different way not just on one side but in every side to see things clearly. Nicodemus was in the dark truly, figuratively, and symbolically when he sought out Jesus. He couldn’t see all things in his life visibly, he was confused and can’t understand. His know-how and teaching of the Torah and its interpretation, the system around the Sanhedrin, as he was a member, and all the teaching, life and works of Jesus. He was in the middle of all confusion and he needed enlightenment and guidance. All the solutions, answers, and explanations, he found in Jesus Christ. After this late-night conversation with Jesus, in the years that followed, Nicodemus became a secret follower of Jesus and, gradually, was drawn to see things clearly and differently, and finally sees. And when Jesus was really and truly lifted on the cross, Nicodemus was not too far away. He saw who really Jesus is: the Son of the Father who loves us so much, a sacrifice to have eternal life to those who believe and be born again.

My brothers and sisters, like Nicodemus, we also find ourselves going and approaching Jesus in the middle of our loneliest, saddest, and darkest nights. We seek Him for hope and comfort, consolation, guidance, and direction. This gospel, Jesus’ meeting Nicodemus is one of the most powerful, encouraging, hopeful and assuring parts in the gospels. Like Nicodemus, we also have a lot of questions, fears, and doubts, but Jesus will continually welcome with love, patience, understanding, mercy, and

² John 3: 16 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

compassion. His love will transform our gloomiest nights into a morning light of hope, He will transform our Good Friday despair into Easter joy and happiness.

Let this be our prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Your suffering and death brought life for us sinners. May Your saving love consume, change, and transform my life, and be a born-again, to have a *metanoia*, a change of heart. May I desire You above everything and assist me to love what you love and deny what you deny and be with you for ever and ever. Amen.”