

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

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

**PENITENTIAL ACT**

Have mercy on us, O Lord.

For we have sinned against you.

Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

And grant us your salvation.

May almighty God have mercy on us.... Amen.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

**OPENING PRAYER**

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, .....

**LITURGY OF THE WORD****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 them 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.**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps. 136:1-6**

**R. 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**

**Glory 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. Glory 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



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (Laetare Sunday) 14th March 2021

Jesus offers a message of hope and salvation to the whole world.

*Give life by your unfailing light to those who walk in the shadow of death....*



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.**

**APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

**All bow for following 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,**

**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.**

**everlasting. Amen.**



'What will we do about the world and all its people?' the Trinity said to one another. They had looked on our world and saw that their people, whom they loved, needed some sort of help; salvation, meaning in life. The best solution came up that one of them would become like us, a human being. God, father of all, sent his Son and his Son, later called Jesus ('because he would save his people from their sins'), said Yes. Jesús said yes without knowing what this 'Incarnation' would entail.

We know how this life story would unfold, with the seeming tragedy of Jesus' death. We might miss the point of why he died. It's in the gospel 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son'. This that we might not be lost. Humanity can be lost in fear, bitterness, poverty, greed and all the realities in ways that we can use or abuse each other. The sending of Jesus was pure and simple love which invites all of us into that same love - to receive it and to share it.

Jesus walks with us on our journey of love. It is a day-by-day journey, bringing an immense joy. Pope Francis in Fratelli tutti, writes: 'Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day.'

Donal Neary SJ, Editor, Sacred Heart Messenger.