



THE LORD'S DAY AT HOME

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (B) LAETARE SUNDAY Sunday 14th March 2021

If you are housebound or self-isolating at this time, please use these prayers to unite yourself with the worship of the Universal Church, and your own Parish this Sunday. If alone, read or say these prayers quietly to yourself. If with another, or in a family, someone should read the "leader" parts, and others respond. It might be suitable to find a special, quiet place at home for your Sunday prayers.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

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

Sign of the Cross

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

A: Amen.

Introduction

L: This is one of those Sunday with a nickname – "Laetare" Sunday. Laetare is the Latin for "Rejoice" and comes from the first word of the antiphon for this Sunday we have just said. It's a reminder that Lent is a joyful Season (even though it can be a little hard!) Today's Scripture readings are full of opposites – exile and return, death and life, light and dark: in Jesus' death and resurrection we find our truest joy. Let's think of that joyful light on our Lenten journey as we begin our prayers today, humbly asking for God's forgiveness:

Penitential Act

L: You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy.

A: Lord, have mercy.

L: You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.

A: Christ, have mercy

L: You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy.

A: Lord, have mercy.

Opening Prayer

L: Let us pray.

○ 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.

A: Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Gospel Reading *John 3:14-21*

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.

A: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Reflection

Our Scripture readings today are a complicated mix, but the main "theme" is "DOWN AND UP" – in that order! In Church our first reading and Psalm are about the exile of God's people to Babylon, and their eventual return. Down

and Up. In the Second reading Saint Paul walks about us being "dead through sin" – DOWN – and raised through grace - UP! Down and up again!

The Gospel is the same – a part of a long conversation Jesus has with the Pharisee Nicodemus by night: Jesus talks about what salvation means: people who have gone DOWN into the darkness, living lives ruled by sin, will be brought UP into the light by virtue of the cross, Jesus himself being "lifted up" to be the invitation to faith that brings eternal life. DOWN AND UP!

We all have our "downs" in life, some bigger than others. The promise of Jesus, who himself DESCENDED into hell before ASCENDING to heaven, is that by believing in him, we can hope to rise up eternally. As we live through our DOWNS let us hope in His UPS – and rejoice!

For our Younger Friends

Everything is quiet. You're in your bedroom. Very still. And mum or dad shouts "What are you up to in there?" Has that ever happened to you? Perhaps because it's SO quiet they think you're hiding something and up to no good! (Perhaps you are!) This is what Jesus talks about today: when we hide something, it can be because WE KNOW it's bad. You don't break the law right in front of a police officer! People who follow Jesus should live IN THE LIGHT, with nothing to hide. Think about this today, and especially with it being Mothers' Day, try and bring a bit of light to you mum if you can!

If gathering as a family, perhaps now continue to discuss what this Gospel passage means to you. If

alone, think about what key message you take from the Scriptures today.

Profession of Faith

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

Intercessions

Prayers for Mothering Sunday

L: We pray for our mothers, who have given us life and love, that we may show them reverence and love. Lord, in your mercy:

A: Hear our prayer.

L: We pray for mothers who have lost a child through death, that their faith may give them hope, and their family and friends support and console them. Lord, in your mercy:

A: Hear our prayer.

L: We pray for mothers who have died, that God may bring them into the joy of his kingdom. Lord, in your mercy:

A: Hear our prayer.

L: We pray for women deprived, for whatever reason, of the joys of motherhood, that the Lord will comfort and sustain them. Lord, in your mercy:

A: Hear our prayer.

Prayer of Blessing

Loving God, as a mother gives life and nourishment to her children, so you watch over your Church. Bless these women, that they may be strengthened as Christian mothers. Let the example of their faith and love shine forth. Grant that we, their sons and daughters, may honour them always with a

spirit of profound respect. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.

Please add your own prayers for the needs of the Church, the world and your local community. You may wish to add particular prayers for family members, friends or neighbours in need at this time.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

L: At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

A: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

L: We place before you with joy these prayers, O Lord, asking that we may present them to you, as is fitting, for the salvation of all the world. Through Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.

Before Spiritual Communion

L: Loving Father, by your gracious gift each year your faithful await the sacred paschal feasts with the joy of minds made pure, so that, more eagerly intent on prayer and on the works of charity, and participating in the mysteries by which they have been reborn, they may be led to the fullness of grace that you bestow on your sons and daughters. At the Last Supper Jesus your Beloved Son showed the fullness of your love, as he gave his Body and Blood for his people. Even though we are not in Church today, and not able to receive communion, we now open our minds and hearts to your generous love and the gift of Jesus your Son, welcoming him spiritually into our lives.

Spiritual Communion

A: My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love you above all things and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul. Since

I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever. Amen.

Pause for a moment of silent prayer and reflection.

Thanksgiving Psalm

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

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

L: By the rivers of Babylon there we sat and wept, remembering Zion; on the poplars that grew there we hung up our harps.

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

L: 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.'

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

L: O how could we sing the song of the Lord on alien soil? If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!

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

L: O let my tongue cleave to my mouth if I remember you not, if I prize not Jerusalem above all my joys!

THE CONCLUDING RITES

Final Prayer and Blessing

L: Let us pray.

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.

A: Amen.

L: May the Lord ✠ bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

A: Amen.

L: Let us bless the Lord!

A: Thanks be to God!