

The Eucharist

14 March 2021

◆ FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT/ B



The tone of today's celebration is set by the opening word of the Mass, namely 'Rejoice'. It expresses the attitude which the Church wishes us to adopt at this point in our Lenten journey. The opening prayer of the Mass spells out the reason for this joy: through God's Son, Jesus, the Christ, the world is reconciled to God.



Jesus said to Nicodemus: 'The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert ...'

FIRST READING *(2 Chronicles 36:14-16.19-23)*

This reading makes reference to two specific events in the history of Israel. The first, the exile of the people of Jerusalem and surrounding areas to Babylon took place in 587 B.C. The second, the releasing of the exiles and the return of a number of them to their native land took place fifty years later. Both events are here interpreted in terms of punishment for infidelity and God's subsequent mercy.

SECOND READING *(Ephesians 2:4-10)*

One of the major sources of disputes in the history of the Church has been the attempts to reconcile two aspects of salvation, namely, that it is offered to us freely by God and that the way we live is important also. In this reading St Paul emphasises the former.

GOSPEL *(John 3:14-21)*

Today's Gospel is part of the account of the visit paid by Nicodemus to Jesus, by night, because he was afraid of the authorities. Ironically, Jesus stresses that it is only those who do wrong that ought to fear public censure, thereby implying that Nicodemus' real weakness is his lack of faith.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Is 66:10-11)

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

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

Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

And with your spirit.

Penitential Act

Brethren (brothers and sisters),
let us acknowledge our sins,
and so prepare ourselves
to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

A brief pause for silence follows.

**I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,**

And, striking their breast, they say:

**through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

The Gloria is not said.

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,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

(2 Ch 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

(Eph 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 has meant us to live it.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

(Jn 3:16)

**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

(Jn 3:14-21)



The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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

(Nicene Creed)

**I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.**

**I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,**

At the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow.

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The priest introduces the Prayer of the Faithful.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

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.

Eucharistic Prayer III

(Preface II of Lent)

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right and just.

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you have given your children a sacred time for the renewing and purifying of their hearts, that, freed from disordered affections, they may so deal with the things of this passing world as to hold rather to the things that eternally endure.

And so, with all the Angels and Saints, we praise you, as without end we acclaim:

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

You are indeed Holy, O Lord, and all you have created rightly gives you praise, for through your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power and working of the Holy Spirit, you give life to all things and make them holy, and you never cease to gather a people to yourself, so that from the rising of the sun to its setting a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.

Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you: by the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts we have brought to you for consecration, that they may become the Body and Blood of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate these mysteries.

For on the night he was betrayed he himself took bread, and, giving you thanks, he said the blessing, broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT,
FOR THIS IS MY BODY,
WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

In a similar way, when supper was ended, he took the chalice, and, giving you thanks, he said the blessing, and gave the chalice to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT,
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD,
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT,
WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR MANY
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

The mystery of faith.

**We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.**

Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial of the saving Passion of your Son, his wondrous Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, and as we look forward to his second coming, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice.

Look, we pray, upon the oblation of your Church and, recognizing the sacrificial Victim by whose death you willed to reconcile us to yourself, grant that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ.

May he make of us

an eternal offering to you, so that we may obtain an inheritance with your elect, especially with the most Blessed Virgin Mary,

Mother of God,

with blessed Joseph, her Spouse, with your blessed Apostles and glorious Martyrs (with Saint N.: the Saint of the day or Patron Saint) and with all the Saints, on whose constant intercession in your presence we rely for unfailing help.

May this Sacrifice of our reconciliation,
we pray, O Lord,
advance the peace and salvation of all the world.
Be pleased to confirm in faith and charity
your pilgrim Church on earth,
with your servant **N.** our Pope and **N.** our Bishop,
the Order of Bishops, all the clergy,
and the entire people you have gained for your own.

Listen graciously to the prayers of this family,
whom you have summoned before you:
in your compassion, O merciful Father,
gather to yourself all your children
scattered throughout the world.

To our departed brothers and sisters
and to all who were pleasing to you
at their passing from this life,
give kind admittance to your kingdom.
There we hope to enjoy for ever the fullness of your glory
through Christ our Lord,
through whom you bestow on the world all that is good.

Through him, and with him, and in him,
O God, almighty Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honour is yours,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

THE COMMUNION RITE

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

**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.**

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
graciously grant peace in our days,
that, by the help of your mercy,
we may be always free from sin
and safe from all distress,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever.**

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins,
but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And with your spirit.

Amen.

*The priest may invite the people to exchange a sign of peace
and Christian fellowship. As the priest breaks the consecrated
Host the following is sung or said:*

**Lord of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.**

Showing the Eucharist to the people, the priest says:

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.**

Communion Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 121:3-4)

**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.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

Look upon those who call to you, O Lord,
and sustain the weak;
give life by your unfailing light
to those who walk in the shadow of death,
and bring those rescued by your mercy from every evil
to reach the highest good.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

Thanks be to God.

Personal Prayer

Lord our God, in today's Gospel we hear one of the most
consoling passages of all scripture, that your reason for
sending your Son, Jesus, among us as a human being
was your great love for us and the entire human race.

Your main purpose was not to condemn us but to bring
us to yourself through him.

May this thought inspire us to approach you with
confidence and to banish from our consciousness any
image which depicts you as a vengeful God.

We make this prayer, through him who reconciles us to
yourself, your Son, Jesus the Christ, our Lord. Amen.