

March 14, 2021

Fourth Sunday of Lent

2 Chr 36:14-16, 19-23

Eph 2:4-10

Jn 3:14-21

GROW: We all have mementoes that we treasure – a handmade Mother’s Day card, a delicate glass sculpture inherited from a relative, perhaps a fine piece of woodwork or beautifully woven quilt. We treasure them because they remind us of someone we love. Now, think about that we are God’s “handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance”! Our God, rich in mercy, rich in love, treasures us so much that he created each of us in his image and gives each of us grace – a pure, free gift. As we look in the mirror, we may be tempted to see only our imperfections. But Paul reminds us that if we look at ourselves the way God does and accept the gift of his love and grace, and cooperate with it working in us, we can live in Christ in the here and now, by extending love and mercy to others, and in eternity, in God’s loving embrace.

GO: Reading the news and social media, the phrase in today’s Gospel that “people preferred darkness to light” seems as true now as it was in John’s time. Sinfulness and evil still cause great harm in our societies. The good news is that it is also as true for us as it was then that God sent his only Son, “not ... to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.” Clearly, the world is a work in progress. We are a work in progress. Yet today’s readings remind us that we can choose light over darkness by accepting the gift of faith and grace that our patient and merciful God bestows on us. It doesn’t mean that we should turn off the news or avoid necessary conflict, but instead do our part to bring light to the situations we encounter. We know the kingdom of God won’t be built in a day, or even a millennium, but we take a step toward building the Kingdom when we allow God’s light to enter our hearts and then share that light with others through our witness, words, and prayer.

GIVE: Choose light! Respond to a troubling event in your community or state by seeking a concrete way to help – donate to a local Catholic Charities or relief organization, or call your parish and see if you can organize a donation drive or put a message in the bulletin asking for help from generous parishioners.