

P—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.
All—Amen.

Preface II of Lent

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—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:

All—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. (Kneel)

Acclamation (Stand)

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

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

PILGRIMAGE SCHEDULES

ENTHRALLING EASTERN EUROPE (Sep 12 - 26, 2024)
Austria - Slovakia - Hungary - Poland - Czech Republic
with Fr. Arvin Soriano

SACRED HEART & MARIAN JOURNEYS (Sep 25 - Oct 11, 2024)
Portugal - Spain - France - Italy with Fr. Godwin Tatlonghari

THE COLORS OF HEAVEN AT OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE, MEXICO (Oct 1 - 11, 2024) with Fr. Domie Guzman, SSP

ADRIATIC COAST WITH MEDJUGORJE (Oct 5 - 18, 2024)
Austria - Slovenia - Bosnia Hercegovina - Croatia - Montenegro
with Fr. Ricky Montanez

FAITH & FUN JOURNEY TO SOUTHERN ITALY (Oct 13 - 25, 2024) with Fr. Gius Garcia

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Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion (Kneel)

P—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.

All—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 122 [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 (Stand)

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world, illuminate our hearts, we pray, with the splendor 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.
All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P—Bow down for the blessing.
(Pause)

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.
All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.
All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.
All—Thanks be to God.

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Second Reading (Eph 2:4–10)

The apostle Paul declares that what saves us, what gives hope, is not our own efforts but God's grace and mercy.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ—by grace you have been saved—raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast. For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.

—The word of the Lord.
All—Thanks be to God.

Verse before the Gospel (Jn 3:16) (Stand)

All—God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so everyone who believes in him might have eternal life.

Gospel (Jn 3:14–21)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.
All—Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS said to Nicodemus: "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did

not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

—The Gospel of the Lord.
All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (Sit)

Profession of Faith (Stand)

All—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 again 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.

Prayer of the Faithful

P—The cross of Jesus reminds us not only of our sinfulness but also of God's infinite love and mercy. With full confidence, we acknowledge our weakness as we say:

R—Merciful Lord, listen to your people.

C—May the Church remain a living sign of God's love and mercy in times of darkness and despair. We pray: **(R)**

C—May our government and civil leaders strive to live by God's truth and walk in God's light, forsaking the culture of death and corruption. We pray: **(R)**

C—May we become more aware that sin not only offends God but also wounds us and our community. May we have frequent recourse through the sacrament of Penance that reconciles us to God and to one another. We pray: **(R)**

C—May the Lord wash away our hatred, banish violence and terrorism from our midst, and restore tranquility and justice. We pray: **(R)**

C—May the sick, the elderly, and the suffering realize from our care and attention that they are loved by God. We pray: **(R)**

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: **(R)**

P — Heavenly Father, make us witnesses to the spirit of the cross by becoming beacons of peace and hope for our brothers and sisters.

This we ask through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



Presentation of the Gifts (Stand)

P—Pray, brethren...

All—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

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Is 66:10–11)

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

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

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P—The spirit of Lent invites us to recall our sins and failings, moving us to be sorry for them. However, our sorrow over our dark past should lead not to pessimism but to hope. Because we have been gifted with the immeasurable riches of God's grace, we have come to the light and are called to bring Christ's light to our world.

Penitential Act

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

P—Have mercy on us, O Lord.

All—For we have sinned against you.

P—Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

All—And grant us your salvation.

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

All—Amen.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

(The Gloria is omitted.)

Collect

P—Let us pray. (Pause)

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, God, for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (2 Chr 36:14–16, 19–23) (Sit)

Because of their sinfulness, the inhabitants of the southern kingdom of Judah were deported to Babylon. God ended the people's exile by inspiring the Persian King Cyrus to let them return to their country.

A reading from the second Book of Chronicles

IN THOSE DAYS, all the princes of Judah, the priests, and the people added infidelity to infidelity, practicing all the abominations of the nations and polluting the LORD's temple which he had consecrated in Jerusalem.

Early and often did the LORD, the God of their fathers, send his messengers to them, for he had compassion on his people and his dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised his warnings, and scoffed at his prophets, until the anger of the LORD against his people was so inflamed that there was no remedy. Their enemies burnt the house of God, tore down the walls of Jerusalem, set all its palaces afire, and destroyed all its precious objects. Those who escaped the sword were carried captive to Babylon, where they became servants of the king of the Chaldeans and his sons until the kingdom of the Persians came to power. All this was to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah: "Until the land has retrieved

its lost sabbaths, during all the time it lies waste it shall have rest while seventy years are fulfilled."

In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD inspired King Cyrus of Persia to issue this proclamation throughout his kingdom, both by word of mouth and in writing: "Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD, the God of heaven, has given to me, and he has also charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever, therefore, among you belongs to any part of his people, let him go up, and may his God be with him!"

—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 137)

R—Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!

Sr. M. C. A. Parco, FSP



1. By the streams of Babylon/ we sat and wept/ when we remembered Zion./ On the aspens of that land/ we hung up our harps. (R)

2. For there our captors asked of us/ the lyrics of our songs,/ and our despoilers urged us to be joyous:/ "Sing for us the songs of Zion!" (R)

3. How could we sing a song of the LORD/ in a foreign land?/ If I forget you, Jerusalem,/ may my right hand be forgotten! (R)

4. May my tongue cleave to my palate/ if I remember you not,/ if I place not Jerusalem/ ahead of my joy. (R)



ST PAUL'S MEDIA **pastoral ministry** **AMBUHAY** **MISSALETTE**

FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION, MISSION
SYNOD 2021-2024



Year 37 No. 49

Fourth Sunday of Lent/ Laetare Sunday (B) — Rose/Violet

March 10, 2024

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

If we trace a trajectory of our forty-day Lenten journey, we will be surprised to find ourselves already at the midpoint. This season of grace is heavily characterized by a somber and solemn mood. The Church, like a true Mother, realizes that our penitential actions and self-introspection, once pushed to the extreme, can somehow leave us wretched and deplorable.

Thus, on this Fourth Sunday of Lent we have a break as we celebrate *Laetare Sunday*, from the Latin word for "to rejoice." It is the same root that gives us the old-fashioned girl's name *Laetitia* or *Leticia*, shortened to "Letty." Today is also sometimes called "*Let up Sunday*" because it is a day on which everyone could let up on their Lenten penances. Or it is simply *Mid-Lent Sunday*, the only day when the altar in the church can be decorated with flowers, musical instruments can be played again by the choir, and the presider may wear rose-colored vestments instead of the usual violet.

When one speaks of a rosy future, it conjures an image of a person whose heart is brimming with hope. One who wears rose-colored glasses is said to be cheerful and optimistic. The readings proclaimed on *Laetare Sunday* help us recover hope and bring back joy as we traverse through our Lenten journey fraught with self-recrimination and contrition. It is with the prism of joyful hope, rather than darkness and despair, that we read God's word and allow them to speak to our own time and experience.

The struggle between light and darkness is evident in today's readings. In the Second Book

by Fr. Paul J. Marquez, SSP



of Chronicles, we find that the entire generation of Judah had turned their back against God. The tentacles of corruption spread far and wide, sparing no one, gripping not only the masses but even the princes of Judah and the priests at the Temple. God tried to woo back his people to himself by sending his messengers, but to no avail. They despised God's warnings, mocked his messengers, and scoffed at his prophets.

In rejecting the light being offered to them by God, the people of Judah brought upon themselves the darkest experience that could ever descend upon a people. Some were slain by the sword, while those who survived were thrown into exile in Babylon and made into slaves. The walls of the great city were torn down, the palaces set afire, and worst of all, their enemies burnt the house of God. In their dark experience of exile, they cried out: "*How could we sing a song of the Lord in a foreign land? If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand be forgotten!*"

After long years in exile, the

people of Judah saw light again when Cyrus, king of Persia, defeated and brought Babylon to its knees. Cyrus ordered the exiles to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple.

Today's Gospel presents the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, one of the leading Pharisees. He came under cover of darkness seeking for light. Jesus predicts to him the sacrifice he was about to make in Calvary: "*Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.*" Jesus presents God to Nicodemus as one who is superabundant in grace and mercy, whose desire is to save humanity rather than to condemn us.

Today's reading from the Letter to the Ephesians cannot emphasize enough our responsibility to accept God's offer of light. "*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast*" (Eph 2:8-9).