

The Fourth Sunday of Lent -- March 11, 2018

THEME

INTRODUCTION

"God so loved the world that He gave his Son that whoever believes in Him might not perish but might believe in Him might have eternal life" taken from today's gospel .This is one of the well known and beloved verses of scripture. It is John 3:16 that we see displayed so often on television ,at sporting events ,usually on a banner or sign attached somewhere in the arena or stadium.

This is a verse that should be memorized, recited and the subject of our meditation .We might reflect on the three parts of the verse: God's love God's Son and our belief.

First there is God's love. This world that God so loved is not some idealized place where people try to live in justice and peace. This world with all the crime dishonesty wars and constant feuding that divide people with all its greed and immorality and pettiness ` this world is so loved by God that He wanted to bring healing and new life to it.

The first reading from the Old Testament the Book of Chronicles gives us a summary of Israel's rebellion against the God who gave them life. It says "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. They mocked the messengers of God, despised His warnings and scoffed at the prophets" . Israel's story is our generation and really every life.

Still God so loved the world ,we inhabit ,that He sent us His Son.

In today's second reading, St Paul teaches us that the saving plan of God was fulfilled in Jesus Christ He says "when we were dead in our transgressions ,God brought us to life with Christ. Paul knew that from experience .He had persecuted the Church, he was the greatest persecutor and enemy of the Church,maniacal his quest to arrest and imprison Christians. Then out of nowhere on the road to Damascus, the Christ appeared to him. With that his life was changed, he had done nothing to deserve it, but salvation was now his in Jesus Christ. St Paul changed from being archenemy of the Church , to its most fervent disciple. You can read all about the conversion of St Paul in the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles chapter nine. Like St Paul he realized Jesus Christ is the way for us to salvation, was now his, in Jesus Christ, forgiveness and new life for us members of the human race.

God so loved the world that he sent us His only Son. Jesus Christ is the bridge between our sin and God's healing.

Finally there is our belief. Lent is not a time simply sympathize with the cross of Jesus, but to embrace it i.e. that is to begin once more to follow Jesus with our lives. It is not the gazing but the following that brings healing and new life. Are we willing to take the step of repentance, to change how we live? My sin left to itself is toxic. AMEN