



“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.”

***THE GOSPEL.*** John 3:14-21

*For God so loved the world ...*

Nicodemus  
came to Jesus at night.  
His heart ached to know more  
about God. So Jesus explained to him  
and to us,  
how God loved us first.

*For God so loved the world that  
he gave his only son.*

We know how much it cost the Father.  
In the story of Abraham and Isaac  
We can see how Abraham felt  
before God said to stop.  
Now we know how  
God felt when  
offering his  
Son.

God loved us that much.  
God loved us first.

He knew we needed Jesus,  
whom we can see and touch and love

Thank you, God, for  
love incarnate

**THE FIRST READING. 2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23**

*Early and often did the Lord, the God of their fathers,  
send his messengers to them.*

Father in heaven,

I ran into you early this morning when I caught a glimpse  
of the crescent moon through the kitchen window.  
And in the news: everyone was donating food  
to feed the hungry

Later I saw you when Al, a homeless man,  
taught me once more about gratitude.

—when laughter diffused tension,

doctors and nurses went  
without sleep caring  
for covid patients.

Your “messengers”  
come early  
and often.

God, thank you.  
Keep me open to them.

**THE SECOND READING. Ephesians 2:4-10**

*By grace you have been saved...*

No place exists  
where there is no grace.

Whether we are alone or with others,  
in storms, churches, or beaches,  
you are there, O pure love.

Pour that grace  
into us.  
Use us to spread your grace and love  
  
whether in  
birthing rooms  
or on deathbeds, or  
at all the places in between. (Annie Osdiek)

### **REFLECTION ON THE READINGS: John Foley S.J.**

God is light. We have all heard this preached, but the readings on this Fourth Sunday in Lent drive the point home. The question: can we look at the light?

As the [First Reading](#) says, the people of Judah “added infidelity to infidelity” by worshipping false gods, polluting the sacred temple, ignoring God—and doing it with vigor. The Reading gives us the terrible details.

#### **Listen to God this Lent.**

Out of compassion God sent prophets to warn them, but each of them received only scorn. “There was no remedy,” the reading says. The people were condemned by their own actions. God's love remained constant, but theirs did not. An invading force took them as captives into Babylon, where they remained in exile for seventy years until the good and just King Cyrus conquered Babylon and let them go.

They had suffered in Babylon. For a [Responsorial Psalm](#) we have one of the most poignant of all psalms, the exquisite number 137. In it the people weep as captives in a foreign land. They refuse to sing songs of their homeland because they are exiled from everything they held dear, everything that their own infidelity had robbed from them. As far as they know, the light of life had gone out.

It was not God but they who had closed their eyes to the light. John's [Gospel](#) tells us that a person is condemned because that person “has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” God has no desire to condemn, but people condemn themselves by walling God out.

At the end of the [Gospel](#) there is a very interesting, wise saying that sums up the message of this week's Lenten readings:

“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.”

Maybe these sentences reveal the heart of sin itself. Light displays too much of our life. We become ashamed. We hide ourselves.

Yet we are built to seek the light.