

Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ! / God loved the world so much, he gave us his only Son, / that all who believe in him might have eternal life. / Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

GOSPEL

Jn 3:14-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

God sent his Son into the world that we might be saved through him.

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.

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT / B

10 MARCH 2024

GOD’S LOVE, GIFT AND GRACE

On this *Lactare* Sunday (so called for the first word of the liturgy is “rejoice”) we find in the Letter to the Ephesians: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” (2:8). To contemplate this statement is to begin to understand the generous mercy and love of God for each of us.

This reading follows 2 Chronicles that recounts the fall of Jerusalem, despite the compassion of God for the people, but then King Cyrus of Persia liberating the exiles. So as the passage begins in Ephesians we see the continuity with God, who is rich in mercy. Three times “grace” is repeated: “by grace you have been saved,” “the immeasurable riches of God’s grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” and “for by grace you have been saved through faith.” This reiteration accentuates the love of God and invites us to know that “we are God’s work of art, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”

John’s Gospel reminds us “God so loved the world that he gave his only son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (3:16). With his clear illumination of light and darkness, John affirms that “those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

How will we respond to God’s love, gift and grace?

FIRST READING

2 Chron 36: 14-16, 19-23

A reading from the second book of Chronicles.

The wrath and the mercy of the Lord are revealed in the exile and liberation of his people.

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.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 136. R. v. 6

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

1. By the rivers of Babylon / there we sat and wept, / remembering Zion: / on the poplars that grew there / we hung 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.

When we were dead through sins, he brought us to life.

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.

Dr Rosemary Canavan



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Our Parishes acknowledge and honour the Bidjigal and Gadigal People as traditional custodians of this land, that we stand on.



4th Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday)

Go Make Disciples, The Mission Plan for the Archdiocese of Sydney



Please pray for the:

Recently Deceased: Ange Portelli, Jose Barreto Martins, Ronald Camenzuli, Mauro Soriano, Val Brooks, June (Noonie) Power, Christine Lawes, Simon Pedisich, Piera Scarfaro, and all those who have died from the Covid-19 Virus.



Anniversary: Antonia Torchia, Alda Ballaco, Marika Cubasci, Vlade Prtenjaca, Stjepan Cavlovic, Jesuina Sarmiento, Florinda Courte-Real, Alexandro Corte-Real, Lorencia, Carla dos Santos, Connie Silvio, Mary Lawes, Kerop Amirian, Fr Adrien Meaney, Mary Deans, Paul McDonald, May Somerville, Patrick & Kathleen Aleer, Betty Sullivan, Wally Benington, Maria Ostroman, Daniel Pieskzo, Gwen Kendall, Carmen Grima, Lorenzo Montresor

Deceased: Sime Pedisich, Joyce Gander, Agnes Brisbane. All the souls in Purgatory.

The Sick: Helen Facione Stephany Hiew, Margaret Gately, Maureen Maron, Sandra Russell, Bishop Peter Ingham, Ha Oi Lan, Mario Assini, Sam Strano, Josephine Regan, Mary Vella, Beatriz Visperas, Michael Victor, Marcus O'Dean, Angela Beveridge, Merley Nate Fien, John Sarniak Thomson, Heracleo & Mamerta Dela Torre, and Santa Viselli. Pray for the sick, the dying, the poor and homeless in our parishes, and pray for World Peace, and those suffering from Covid.

Where will Fr. John be celebrating Mass next weekend?

Saturday - 16 March 2024 - 5.00pm St Andrew's (Livestreamed)
Sunday - 17 March 2024 - 10.00am St Agnes'



Greetings dear parishioners and visitors of our Twinned Catholic Parishes of St Andrew & St Agnes Malabar-Matraville.

Rejoice, Rejoice again I say Rejoice! Today is Rejoice Sunday (Laetare Sunday) our halfway point of our 2024 Lenten Journey. The colour of Rose is vividly before us in the vestments of our Mass this weekend. This weekend is an anticipation of the celebration of the Pasion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus.

I hope that all your Lenten fasting, praying and almsgiving are going well. In concern with your Project Compassion Envelopes can you please return each week your giving on any of the collection plates. 'You can help women like Leaia (from Samoa) access clean water and look forward to a brighter future with her family by making a generous donation in your Project Compassion boxes and envelopes'.

This Wednesday 13 March at 7.00pm, our Lenten 2nd Rite of Reconciliation will take place at St Andrew's Malabar. I would encourage all at either St Andrew's or St Agnes' to be part of this sacrament of healing before our Easter celebrations. There will be 1st Rite of Reconciliation at St Agnes' Wednesday 20 March from 5.30—6.00pm.

We welcome this Saturday 5.30pm Mass at St Agnes our Kindy and Year 6 Buddies Mass.

Following up further comments with the merger of our two parishes as one. There will be one consultative Parish Council made up of members of our St Andrew's and St Agnes' communities as one. There will be one Parish Finance Committee of the one new parish. The Churches of this new overarching parish will contain the Churches of St Andrew and St Agnes our Churches form the two sides of the heart that beat together as one.

Congratulations to 81 children from St Andrew's and St Agnes' Parishes who received their 1st Reconciliation this last week.

Palm Sunday is 24 March, and we will be asking for your assistance at both St Andrew's and St Agnes' in bringing in freshly cut palms from your gardens to help celebrate Palm Sunday. I would ask if you could deliver your freshly cut palms on either Thursday or Friday 21, 22 March at both churches. Many thanks.

God Bless

Fr John



We welcome into our Parish community **Aria Mae O'Kane, Cillian Thomas O'Malley, Tadhg Jack Rosam, Archer Denis Wilmot**, and **Ella Jane Wilmot** who received the sacrament of Baptism on Saturday at St Andrew's Malabar. **Congratulations.**



We also welcome into our Parish community **Dominik Beale, Scarlett Victoria Briffa, Jackson Gregory Gander**, and **Amalia Rose McGarry** who will receive the sacrament of Baptism on Sunday at St Andrew's Malabar. **Congratulations.**

Upcoming Wedding— Congratulations to Hannah Bollom and Thomas Matthews who will marry this Saturday, 16 March at St Agnes', Matraville.



Funeral for the late Ange Portelli - Thursday, 14 March at 10am St Andrew's Malabar