

God so loved...

1. Read — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

3. Pray — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence.

~~~~~  
**How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

**SIGN UP free for  
Link to Liturgy**



# Quick Connect

**What is the Gospel saying? John 3:14-21** — Page 1

**What is the Church saying Past and Present?** Pages 1-3

**What is God saying to you through this passage?** Page 4

## **Gospel Reading – John 3:14-21 – Daily Roman Missal**

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.

## **Spiritual Reading—From Saint Leo the Great**

When the Lord says according to the Gospel of John cannot be doubted: "God so loved the world that he gave his Only-Begotten Son, in order that everyone who believes in him might not perish, but might have eternal life." Likewise certain is what the Apostle Paul said about his same thing: "Christ love us, and gave himself up in our place, an offering to God in the odor of sweetness." In saving all by the cross of Christ, the Father and the Son had one will and one plan, nor could that be upset by any consideration which had been mercifully established and unchangeably fixed before the eternal ages. Consequently, therefore, he who has taken on the true and whole man, dearly beloved, has taken up also the true senses of the body and the true affections of the soul. Nor, because all within him was full of mysteries, full of miracles, does this mean therefore that he wept with false tears, or ate food with false hunger, or slept with pretended sleep. He was despised in our lowliness, saddened in our sorrow, and crucified in our pain. For this did his mercy undergo the sufferings of our morality, that he might save it. For this did his strength accept (these sufferings), that he might overcome them. It is what Isaiah openly foretold, saying: "He bears our sins; he grieves for us, and we consider him in pain, in beatings, and in distress. He was wounded for our crimes, and weakened because of our sins, and by his wound are we healed."

When, therefore, dearly beloved, the Son of God says, “Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by,” he used the voice of our nature, and he pleads the cause of our human frailty and disquiet – in order to strengthen patience and drive out fear in those things we shall have to bear.

### **Passion of God - Lesson and Discussion**

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only son”*

This Sunday’s gospel reading is one of the most recognized Scripture passages in our culture. John’s powerful statement helps us understand what God really did for us and stresses how much He passionately loves us.

**What did God do for us?** The first part of John 3:16 that states “For God so loved the world” shows “the only explanation that we shall ever have of the gift of eternal life made possible for us in the redemption achieved in Christ is the incredible love of God for the world”[1]. This cannot be stressed enough; the only reason we have a chance at salvation is because of God and His infinite love for us. Showing that God the Father holds nothing back, “he gave his only Son” as a final sacrifice for all. If we recall from the second Sunday of Lent, the first reading was about Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac, but God stopped him at the last minute. Several thousand years later, God takes His son and sacrifices Him on the cross.

**Where did God’s son come from?** God’s son is Jesus Christ. The words “He gave us His only son” indicate that Jesus existed since the time of God, and since God has existed from the beginning, so has Jesus Christ. This is also laid out in the first verses of John’s gospel, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”[2] Jesus Christ came from heaven by the power and will of God the Father for the salvation of the world.

**Why did God do this?** It plainly states in John’s gospel, “so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life.” Jesus said that He is the way, the truth and the life (verse) and brings us life to the fullest[3]. There are only two options: we can accept Him and have eternal life, or reject Him and let judgment befall us; there is no third option.

**But the Bible say that Jesus did not come to condemn us?** Yes, this is true. Jesus did not come to condemn us, but to save us, as it says in John 3:17. In today’s second reading, St. Paul writes, “by grace you have been saved”[4]. However, we will be judged and condemned if we do not accept this belief and have faith. “Condemn: the Greek root means both judgment and condemnation. Jesus’ purpose is to save, but his coming provokes judgment; some condemn themselves by turning from the light”[5] “There will still be judgment, but it will be one that man will bring upon himself, because just as ‘he who believes in

(Christ) is not condemned,’ so also ‘he who does not believe is condemned already’ (ib. 18). Whoever rejects Christ the Redeemer, whoever denies him, excludes himself by his own act from salvation, and God’s judgment will only ratify his choice.”[6]

**If all we do is believe in Jesus, we will be saved?** Yes. This is why St. Peter said, “There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved.”[7] However, by believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, we must also adhere to all that He preached, taught, and established here in this world. We are first saved by grace, and if we believe, we will be saved by our faith in Jesus Christ. By living in His grace and believing in Him through our faith, we will naturally have charity for God and neighbor by our works. As John said in his letter, “And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit that he gave us.”[8]

### **STORY – Wheelbarrow**

A guy decided to show off his skills by walking a tight rope over a waterfall. But before he began, he asked the crowd, “How many have the faith that I can walk this tight rope?” The crowd cheered him on, and when he made it to the other side, they cheered for him again. He then silenced the crowd and asked, “How many have the faith that I can do it blind-folded?” The crowd cheered him on, and when he made it to the other side, they cheered for him again. He then silenced the crowd, looked toward some construction equipment where there just happened to be a wheelbarrow. He asked the crowd, “How many have the faith that I can carry this wheelbarrow over my head, blind-folded across this tight rope?” The crowd cheered him on, and when he made it to the other side, they cheered for him again. He then silenced the crowd and said, “I want to thank you for the enormous amount of faith you have shown to me, but I am not finished yet! How many have the faith that I can walk this tight rope, blind-folded, carrying this wheelbarrow...with someone in it?” The crowd began to cheer him on, but he stopped them with one last request... “May I have a volunteer?”

St. James expands upon this in his letter; stating that we should live out our faith by our actions out of love for God, not just go through the motions in hope of salvation, which is selfish and not faithful. We must strive to not praise ourselves in our faith and charity, but to praise God: “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of your says to them, ‘Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,’ but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”[9]

[1] Jerome Biblical Commentary, The Gospel of John 71:16

[2] Jn. 1:1 [3] Jn. 10:10 [4] Eph. 2:8 [5] Jn. 3:17-19 footnotes [6] Divine Intimacy Vol. II pg. 69 [7] Acts 4:12 [8] 1 Jn. 3:23-24 [9] Js. 14-17 [10] Js. 2:24