

Link to Liturgy



4th Sunday of Lent God so loved...

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Lessons and Discussions

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“For God so loved the world that he gave his only son”

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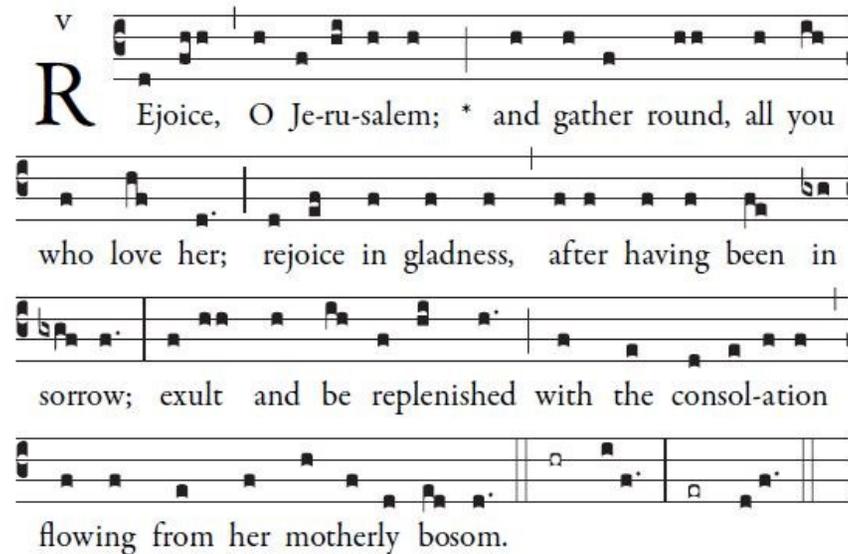
“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert”

Introit (Entrance Antiphon) – Simple English Propers

This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred. Another song can be substituted, but should have the same theme.

Letare Ierusalem

Cf. Is 66: 10, 11

R  Ejoice, O Je-ru-salem; * and gather round, all you
who love her; rejoice in gladness, after having been in
sorrow; exult and be replenished with the consol-ation
flowing from her motherly bosom.

Alternate options:

- Amazing Love
- Lay it down (Matt Maher)
- Lift High the Cross
- Lord I Lift your Name on High
- Once Again
- We fall down
- Crossroads (Remnant)

Collect – Daily Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

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,
One God, for ever and ever.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

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

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
- Glory to you 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.
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

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.

Responsory – Office of Readings – Fourth Sunday of Lent

I hate the ways of falsehood

- Your word is a lantern which guides my steps a light for the pathway before me.

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

- Your word is a lantern which guides my steps a light for the pathway before me.

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

Let us pray. Grant, O merciful God, defense to our weakness; that we who now celebrate the memory of the holy Mother of God may, by the aid of her intercession, rise again from our sins. Amen

"The End" Notes

- [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
- [11] Jn. 3:19
- [12] 2 Chron. 36:15-16
- [13] Divine Intimacy Vol. II pg. 68
- [14] Eph. 2:4-5
- [15] Divine Intimacy Vol. II pg. 69
- [16] Divine Intimacy Vol. II pg. 69
- [17] Jn. 3:20-21
- [18] Js. 4:4
- [19] Divine Intimacy Vol. II pg. 69
- [20] Divine Intimacy Vol. II pg. 69
- [21] Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, 22
- [22] Luke 23:46
- [23] John 16:13
- [24] 1 Timothy 3:15
- [25] Psalm 146; Liturgy of the Hours; Week IV; Wednesday, Morning Prayer
- [26] St. Bede
- [27] Num. 21:4-9
- [28] St. Augustine
- [29] Jn. 3:15
- [30] Divine Intimacy Vol. II pg. 69
- [31] Wisdom 16:6
- [32] St. Augustine
- [33] St. Theophilus of Antioch
- [34] St. Theophilus of Antioch
- [35] St. John Chrysostom Homily 27 Jn. 3:15
- [36] The Navarre Bible: Text and Commentaries

O Lord God, I love you above all things and I love my neighbor for your sake because you are the highest, infinite and perfect good, worthy of all my love. In this love I intend to live and die.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

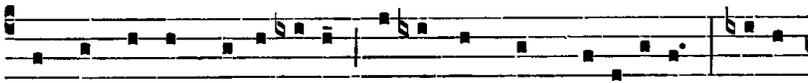
Marian Antiphon – Divine Office (Sunday Compline) – Ave Regina Caelorum

6. 

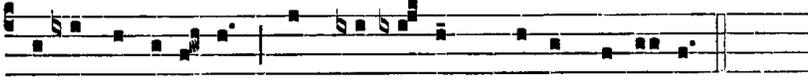
A -ve Regína caelórum, * Ave Dómina Ange-lórum :



Sálve rádix, sálve pórtá, Ex qua mundo lux est órta :



Gáude Vírgo glo-ri- ósa, Su-per ómnes spe-ci- ósa : Vále,



o valde decó-ra, Et pro nó-bis Chrístum exó-ra.

V. Dignare me laudare te Virgo sacrata.

R. Da mihi virtutem contra hostes tuos.

English Translation

Hail, Queen of Heaven; hail, Mistress of the Angels; hail, root of Jesse; hail, the gate through which the Light rose over the earth.

Rejoice, Virgin most renowned and of unsurpassed beauty. Farewell, Lady most comely. Prevail upon Christ to pity us.

V. Let me praise thee, most holy Virgin.

R. Give me strength against thine enemies.

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.

VIDEO - “What If It Were Your Only Son?” - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – Watch from 0:00 to 5:00

<http://youtu.be/KofgSBmweJA>

This is a powerful story read by Matthew Kelly. The story helps us to understand the reality of what God did by giving His only son.

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 con-

demnation. 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]

MOVIE - "Yoda and Luke on Dagobah - POP CULTURE CONNECTION - 3:56

<http://youtu.be/yvObeHrOBv4>

At the end of this clip Luke says, "I don't believe it." Yoda replies, "That is why you fail". Belief in God is essential. Believe is faith and this belief or faith leads to charity (good works). **Why was Yoda able to lift the ship from the swap?** It was his faith, his belief enabled the action.

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

justly, because He did no sin. So He overcame him, who delivered Him over to death, and thus delivered Adam from death."

Who saw Jesus on the cross and was saved from death?

There were several people who were saved from certain kinds of death. First, "We could say that the good thief was the first to experience the saving power of Christ on the cross: he saw the crucified Jesus, the King of Israel, the Messiah, and was immediately promised that he would be in Paradise that very day."[36] Second, St. John, who was at the foot of the cross, was spared a martyr's death and died naturally. Third, Mary witnessed her son hanging on the cross for three hours and was spared death by being assumed both body and soul at the moment of her death. Fourth, Mary Magdalene, who chose to "go and sin no more" is strengthened in her resolved to live a life of Grace and amend her life of sin, placing herself at the feet of Jesus. Fifth, Saint Longinus, who was the Roman Centurion who pierced the side of Christ, had the blood, representing the Eucharist, and the water, representing Baptism, flowed over Saint Longinus bringing about conversion.

[See Link to Liturgy Lesson - The Cross: A Privileged Place] which included a PCC and more reflection for the question and answer above.

Activity - The Star of Life or EMS symbol

Have the group look at The Star of Life or EMS symbol and ask if they have ever seen it before. Read Numbers 21:4-9 and then have them look at the symbol again. Have them point out all of the things that relate. They will see that every aspect of the symbol is represented in this story and that just as medicine can heal and sustain our life, Jesus Christ heals our souls and gives us eternal life. The Star of Life or EMS symbol has a rod with a serpent, and is usually seen on ambulances. This sign has origins in Greek mythology, with the rod of Asclepius and is a sign of healing. It reminds us of the healing that God gave through the staff of Moses.

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion - Act of Love

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

What does serpent signify? The serpent has two meanings. The death of the serpent in the Old Testament is the death of the people's illness. The death of the serpent in the New Testament is the death of Satan, the original serpent in the Garden of Eden.

The other more powerful meaning is that the serpent represents Christ. Jesus takes the place of what the serpent represents, which is sin, although Jesus had no sin. The book of Wisdom says that the serpent was a sign of salvation.[31] While the serpent that Moses held up looked poisonous, it was not. Jesus looked like a man, like any one of us who are sinners, but was not just a man or a sinner. Some of our Church Fathers put this imagery into better context: "The serpent was the cause of death, inasmuch as he persuaded man into that sin, by which he merited death. Our Lord, however, did not transfer sin, i.e. the poison of the serpent, to his flesh, but death; in order that in the likeness of sinful flesh, there might be punishment without sin, by virtue of which sinful flesh might be delivered both from punishment and from sin."[32] "See then the aptness of the figure. The figure of the serpent has the appearance of the beast, but not its poison: in the same way Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh, being free from sin."[33]

What does the "lifting up" signify? The "lifting up" meant His cross being lifted up. "By Christ's being lifted up, understand His being suspended on high, by which suspension He sanctified the air, even as He had sanctified the earth by walking upon it. Herein too is typified the glory of Christ: for the height of the cross was made His glory for in that He submitted to be judged, He judged the prince of this world... And in this the devil found himself vanquished, that he could not upon the cross torment our Lord into hating His murderers: but only made Him love and pray for them the more. In this way the cross of Christ was made His lifting up, and glory."[34]

Why did Jesus have to hang on a cross? Jesus tells us this story to help us understand the relationship of life by lifting the cross. "Do you see the cause of the Crucifixion, and the salvation which is by it? Do you see the relationship of the type to the reality? There the Jews escaped death, but the temporal, here believers the eternal; there the hanging serpent healed the bites of serpents, here the Crucified Jesus cured the wounds inflicted by the spiritual dragon"[35] As St. Theophilus of Antioch explained, "for Adam died justly, because he sinned; out Lord un-

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?"

An employee might as his boss if the boss believes he can get the job done. Players on a team might ask their coach if the coach believes they can win the game. A child might ask a parent if the parent believes they can make straight "A's" None of these people (the employee, the player and the child) would stop at the belief and say, "Well, I guess you believe in me, that is good enough for me, now I don't have to work, play or get good grades, it is enough that you just believe." There is an expectation that with believe comes action, with faith, comes good works.

[See Link to Liturgy Lesson – Full of Grace] – Activity of Grace, Faith and Works

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]

Where is "faith alone" found in the Bible? It is found in the letter of James, "See how a person is justified by works and not by faith alone."[10] "Faith alone" is found in the Bible, but the only time the words "faith" and "alone" are together is when James says we are justified "not by faith alone". In Roman's 3:28 Saint Paul says, "For we consider that a person is justified by faith apart from works of the law." The "works of the law" that He is speaking of is the "law of Moses". In other words it is not the works of the Law of Moses that saved, but rather faith in Je-

sus Christ.

Passion for God - Lesson and Discussion

“whoever lives in truth comes to the light”

God is love. That love for us is everlasting and perfect. There is nothing we can do or say to repay that love. But God wants *us*; He wants all of a person, not just a part of them or part of their time. The passion that God has for us is unbelievable, but are we showing passion for God in return? **Do we strive for our own passions or passion for the Lord? Why or why not?**

Why would some people not have passion for God? As Jesus said, “people preferred darkness to light”[11]. This is nothing new; in the first reading we see God’s chosen people preferring darkness and being punished for it. Even the High Priests and leaders mocked God and the messengers He brought to them. God punished them with the destruction of the Temple and the Babylonian Exile[12].

Where do we see this in today’s society? We see more and more people leaving the Church and Christianity for the darkness. “It is a history which, in spite of so many bitter experiences, is still repeated today in the life of nations, families, and individuals. The more a man lets his passions dominate him, the more he closes himself to the word of God, rejects his messengers, distorts the truth, and suppresses the voice of his conscience, until he ends by living in discord with God, with himself, and with his neighbor.”[13]

If God is a loving God, why does He punish us? God does not punish someone until He has exhausted every avenue possible to get through to the person. It is like a parent who tries to speak to their child and correct them before having to punish them. “...now God punishes us only after he has exhausted the last resources of his infinite love. ‘God who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ’[14].”[15] This Scripture quote is from today’s second reading. St. Paul is saying that “instead of punishing the sins of ungrateful man in man himself, who is always falling back into sin, he punishes man’s sin in his only Son, so that by believing in Christ crucified, man may find salvation.”[16]

es, in mortal men in whom there is not help. Take their breath, they return to clay and their plans that day come to nothing.”[25] Charity gives Hope and hope inspires Faith. These are the three theological virtues given to us at Baptism.

The Bronze Serpent – Lesson and Discussion

“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert”

[See Link to Liturgy Lesson - Lift High the Cross]

Today’s gospel reading opens with Jesus speaking to Nicodemus about the story of Moses and the serpent. This story has very important symbols and parallels to Jesus and the cross.

Why does Jesus mention Moses? “He introduces the teacher of the Mosaic law, to the spiritual sense of that law; by a passage from the Old Testament history, which was intended to be a figure of His Passion, and of man’s salvation.”[26]

What was this story of Moses about? The story that Jesus refers to is from the book of Numbers. After a long journey, many people complained to Moses about their travels and the food. God punished the people with serpents that began attacking them. Many people went back to Moses and God and repented, asking for a cure. God told Moses to make a serpent, wrap it around his staff, and hold it high enough for all to see. Anyone who gazed upon the staff with the bronze serpent would be cured.[27]

What does this have to do with Jesus? Jesus takes on the new staff and is hung high on Golgotha for all to see. He died so that all could be cured not temporally, but spiritually. “Many dying in the wilderness from the attack of the serpents, Moses, by commandment of the Lord, lifted up a brazen serpent and those who looked upon it were immediately healed. The lifting up of the serpent is the death of Christ”[28]. “God had offered the free gift of salvation to the Jews also, as, for instance, when, in order to free them from poisonous serpents, he had ordered Moses to lift up a brazen serpent, so that when anyone who had been bitten by the serpents looked upon the brazen serpent, he was saved from death. But that was but a pale image of the salvation brought by Jesus, who was raised upon the cross ‘that whoever believes in him may have eternal life’[29]”. [30]

searching for this “truth” which Christ gives. Saint Paul writes to Saint Timothy, “But if I should be delayed, you should know how to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth.”[24] The “truth” which Christ gives is indeed found in the church, which is the pillar and foundation of truth.

This is why at the end of the Creed, after professing faith in God, the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit, we then profess faith in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. We have seen how the Father, Son and Spirit share love. **How does the Church share love?** The Church in today’s liturgy is described as the New Jerusalem. The Entrance Antiphon says, “Rejoice, O Jerusalem; and gather round all you who love her; Rejoice in gladness after having been in sorrow; Exult and be replenished with the consolation flowing from her motherly bosom.” The Church is a loving Mother, who gathers her children, who love her. The children were in sorrow but now can exult and have consolation and be replenished from the Churches motherly bosom. **What is a motherly bosom?** Bosoms are breasts. Yes, the Church used the image of children being nourished and replenished from a mother’s breasts. This nourishment and replenishing comes from the liturgy, Sacraments, teaching, prayers, etc. that flow (no pun intended) from the Church.

VIDEO - “I Love Boobies’ Banned At School” - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – Watch from 0:00 to 1:48

http://youtu.be/dSvvBF_Syz8

Our modern American culture is obsessed with “breasts” or as shown in this video “boobies”. Our culture should then find a connection to today’s Entrance Antiphon, but it will not. Why? Our culture sees breasts not as a consolation and replenishment, but rather in a lustful, sensual way. There is no better analogy of The Church and the faithful, than a nursing mother consoling and replenishing her child, at the breast. This beautify analogy can be lost however in our perverted generation.

VIDEO - “Top 10 Reasons for Hope - 2011” - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 6:40

<http://youtu.be/DCRosY4sw7Y>

The Church is called therefore to “love” in the imitation of the Trinity? These 10 reasons for hope are all examples of the Church doing what it does best, loving. It is out of love that the Church gives to the world hope, this is not a false hope that comes from princes, but rather from God. “Put no trust in princ-

Another thing to remember is that God is merciful and just. He did not come to condemn us, because we condemn ourselves when we follow darkness and wickedness. “For everyone who does wicked 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.”[17] If we have a passion for God and live in the light of Christ, we will not be condemned because we are following His grace and mercy. Those who turn away from God have sold their souls to the wicked and thus condemn themselves.

How does one follow darkness? Power, the flesh, and the world are three things that Satan hides in the darkness of. Someone may think, “I’m a pretty good person. I go to Church on Sundays. I pray and treat people nicely.” But God desires more from us. To follow the light means to follow it with a passion. St. James saw the lure of the world and the darkness during his time. He wrote, “Adulterers! Do you not know that to be a lover of the world means enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wants to be a lover of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”[18] This is why you might see a sign that says “John 3:16” at a sports game. It is to remind us that while sports and other worldly things are important, we should not love them with our whole hearts, for our hearts were made to God. **What things of this world that I’m in love with do I need to let go of?**

How can we have passion for God? We must be the new evangelization for the twenty-first century. We must rekindle a passion for God and bring light to all the darkness in this world. Grace and faith are free gifts from God. “Yet for two thousand years this gift has been at hand for all mankind; in order to benefit from it, we have only to believe in Christ, accepting salvation from him and adhering to his gospel.”[19] From the moment we wake to the moment we go to sleep, we should be looking for ways to show our love and appreciation to God. We do this by loving Jesus Christ, His Church, the Magisterium, the Sacred Scriptures, and Sacred Tradition that have been passed down to us. We do this by loving God with our whole mind, body, heart, and soul and by loving our neighbor as our self. “In actual fact we can never go too far in accepting it [his love and mercy] with the gratitude and faith and love it deserves.”[20] **What is one thing I can do everyday to show my passion for God to myself and to others?**

How is having passion for God, living out what we believe?

Living out what we profess in the Apostles Creed? The Apostles Creed is Trinitarian; this means that it states our belief in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. How does each of the persons of the Blessed Trinity show and “love” not “punishment”?

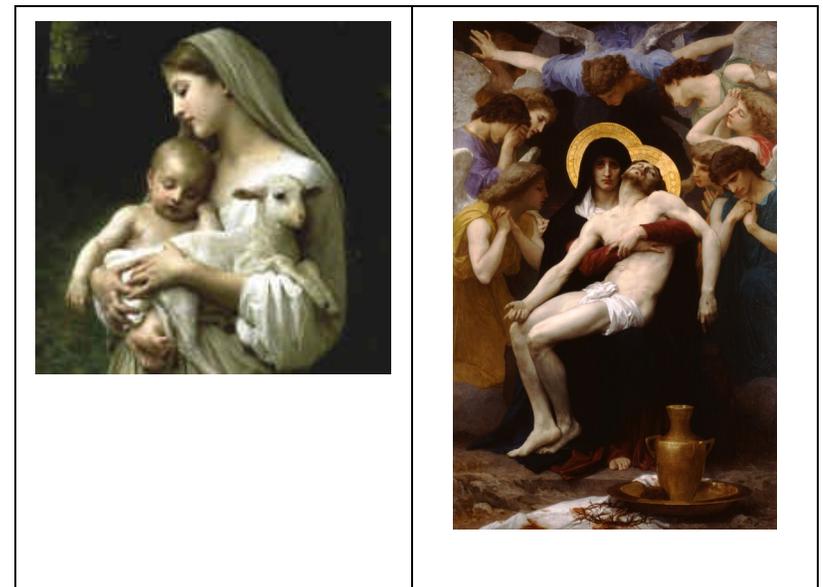
God, the Father – He is the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. He is our Father, a loving Father that is our source of nourishment and protection. **Why did He create earth? Why did He create us?** Out of love. He created us out of love and wanted to share His creation and His love with us. Think of a Father that buys a new car. The Father wants to share the car with his family and friends; he wants others to share in what he has. God is the Father, almighty and He wants to share with us, all that is His.

[See Link to Liturgy Lesson - Holy Trinity: Eternal Exchange of Love]

Jesus, the Son – In giving His one and only Son, who is consubstantial (of the same substance) of the Father, God shares Himself with us. Not only does He share all that He made with us, but also He shares all that He is with us, giving us the opportunity to share in the Divine Life, now and for all eternity. This gift of self is expressed most perfectly on the Cross and is perpetuated at every Mass.

What did it mean for God to become man and share in humanity? Read the Spiritual Reading for Saint Leo the Great’s reflection on this. The Church also tells us, “For, by his Incarnation, he, the Son of God, in a certain way united himself with each man. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human Will, and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin.”[21]

ACTIVITY – The humanity and love of Jesus



The paintings above are two familiar depictions of Our Lord and Lady in art. It is very powerful to meditate on them separately. The first painting can be held up or projected in front of the group and the group can be asked to meditate on the humanity of Christ in His mother’s arms. At this time of meditation the quote above from the Second Vatican Council can be read or even the Spiritual Reading in this packet can be read. After some time, the second picture can be held up or projected and time can be given for a second meditation. Notice in the second painting how The Blessed Virgin Mary is completely embracing her Son. Will we do the same?

The Holy Spirit – The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. God is love. Jesus is the beloved. The Holy Spirit is the shared love of the Father and the Son. This shared love is extended to all humanity, when “Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.’”[22] This prayer of Christ is prayed each night by the Church during Compline (Night Prayer) when we the Body of Christ do as Christ did, “Commend our spirit into the hands of God.” The Holy Spirit was given to us at Pentecost. Jesus foretold this at the Last Supper, when He said, “But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth.”[23] Where is this “truth” found today? The world and each individual soul is in need and indeed