

2nd Wednesday of Easter. 4/14/2021

John 3:16

John 3:16. It has been called the most famous verse from the Bible. We find it in billboards on the side of the road or printed in T-shirts: God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. John 3:16.

It is a simple statement of our Christian faith. It is a beautiful gift that Jesus gave to Nicodemus at the conclusion of their conversation. Their meeting took place early in the ministry of Jesus, when people were starting to take notice of him and trying to figure out what he would be doing. Nicodemus is a doctor of the law, a member of the Sanhedrin, a ruler of the Jews. He is moved by Jesus

and arranges a discreet meeting with him at night. Their social status is far apart, yet Nicodemus comes to Jesus with a humble attitude, opening his heart to this man whose signs endorse as a teacher come from God. In the conversation Nicodemus is puzzled most of the way, but the words of Jesus are a gift that is received by a heart that loves God and his covenant with the chosen people of Israel. Jesus reveals to Nicodemus the mysteries of the incarnation and redemption, way before they are known by Jesus' closest disciples.

We don't hear more about Nicodemus until after the crucifixion, but he must have remained close to Jesus in his heart. As others ran from the cross, Nicodemus has the courage, along with Joseph of Arimathea, to ask Pilate for

the body of Jesus, and to minister to this body by preparing it for burial and laying it to rest in the tomb.

John 3:16. It tells us in a few, simple words, God's plan for salvation. The reason for this salvation plan is the love of God for each one of us, an unconditional love that holds nothing back. The means of salvation is Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, and God by nature, who takes human flesh and lives among us in the incarnation. He offers eternal life to everyone. And it is up to each person, in freedom, to accept Christ and let him give us new life.

As we continue our celebration of the Easter season, let us keep present in our mind the boundless love that God has shown for us in all his mighty deeds, and especially in the life, death and resurrection of our savior, Jesus Christ. And

let us open our hearts with great humility, gratitude and joy to Jesus who comes to us in the Eucharist.