

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent  
March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Cycle B

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** 2 Chronicles 36:14 – 16, 19 – 23.

God is merciful in the liberation of god's people from exile.

**Psalm Response:** Psalm 137: 1 – 2, 3, 4 – 5, 6.

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

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** Ephesians 2: 4 – 10.

The gift of our faith in God has saved us.

**Gospel:** John 3: 14 – 21.

God loves us so much, God sent Jesus to save us.

God is good, **all the time**, All the Time, **God is good REJOICE! LET ME SAY IT AGAIN, REJOICE!** To steal a phrase from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians. Friends this is *Laetare* Sunday, which is a Latin word for rejoice, and was the first word in the Collect for today. Well because our Lenten journey, adventure, is half over. Hopefully your efforts at transforming your lives, and hearts, through fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are at as half-way point as well. However, if you are like me and your answer is "no not yet!" Well fortunately, Jesus tells us to fear not for there is still time. Traditionally in the Roman Church this was a huge feast, celebration worthy of note. For us it is more or less just another Sunday, So Fr. Paul and I wear our Rose colored vestiture to remind us all it is cause for celebration: our God has gifted (graced) us with salvation.

Two lessons I have learned through my lifetime: God's mercy is unlimited and there is nothing I can do to gain God's saving love. For me a very humbling experience because I have always wanted, strove for, to be the first, the best, on top of the heap. It's been part of my learning about my white supremacy, this whole striving to be better than who I am. I have come to realize is it doesn't matter, God loves us for who we are, no

matter where on the heap we are (actually the lower on the heap the more God loves us): We are all enough!

The readings we have today are quite remarkable. Remember last weekend Fr. Paul talking about the worst pandemic any of us experience? Even more devastating than Covid 19. SIN. What we hear today is a path or solution, a way out of our love of the darkness and where to find the light. As a human person I prefer to do, especially bad stuff, in the dark. Then no one, including God, sees it. Much like Nicodemus in our Gospel wanting to secretly meet with Jesus, why? So the other religious leaders would not see him. Fortunately God sees all and still stands ready to forgive.

There is a story I heard recently about a young priest who while in the Seminary committed a sin, he thought was unspeakable, it probably would have stood in the way of his being ordained. So he kept it hidden. Well years later he was assigned to be pastor at a small rural parish. There was a woman in this parish who had the reputation of being a psychic and so when he met with her, he asked her to ask God if her pastor had ever committed a serious sin. Several weeks later he met with her again and inquired if she had asked. She said "yes" she had. "Well how did God respond?" he asked. She said, "God did not remember!"

So it is that God loves us like crazy, God is incredibly merciful, and desperately desires us to be with God forever. This is the truth, and if it is and we can do nothing to gain it why do anything? Because God wants us to promote God's Light in our world of darkness. As a matter of fact at our Baptism each of us was presented with the light of Christ to carry into our world. Saint Mother Therese of Calcutta, of fond memory, knew this as she wrote:

"People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centering,  
FORGIVE THEM ANYWAY.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.

BE KIND ANYWAY.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies.

SUCCEED ANYWAY.

If you are honest and sincere, people may deceive you.

BE HONEST AND SINCERE ANYWAY.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight.

CREATE ANYWAY.

If you find serenity and happiness, some maybe jealous.

BE HAPPY ANYWAY.

The good you do today, will be forgotten tomorrow.

DO GOOD ANYWAY.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough.

GIVE YOUR BEST ANYWAY.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God.

IT WAS NEVER BETWEEN YOU & THEM ANYWAY.

God desires our change of heart, our commitment to bring the Good News into the world around us. May we each rise to the occasion! Rejoice, I say it again Rejoice.

God is Good, **all the time.** All the time, **God is good.**