

Fourth Sunday of Lent**Lectionary: 32****Reading 1:** 2 Chr. 36:14-16, 19-23**Responsorial Psalm:** Ps. 137:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6.**Reading 2:** Eph. 2:4-10**Verse before the Gospel:** Jn. 3:16**Gospel:** Jn. 3:14-21

In yesterday's Gospel Jesus told us to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. **Why?** Because love can only be paid with love; real love cannot be bought, borrowed or mistreated. Love is free and God is love because, "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" (Jn. 3:14).

Therefore, Jesus is the gift of the Father for the world, a gift of love that not everyone acknowledges. We often see Jesus arguing with the Pharisees. They do not see eye to eye on many things, but today in the Gospel of John, Nicodemus is the exception. Nicodemus, a leader of his community, was a man looking for the truth, but also a man who sought Jesus only during nighttime to avoid any troubles from his colleagues or maybe was afraid to be seen with Jesus.

Only few were able to see in Jesus the light of the world. Only a few saw in Jesus the love of the Father. Only a few changed their ways. Jesus tells us why only these few changed their ways, because they

preferred darkness to light. In other words, many times people prefer to live in sin, in all kinds of worldly things and they do not open themselves to change, to the grace of God. They remain in darkness; one of the biggest reasons to remain in darkness is Pride. Pride is an obstacle to growing in love and grace, because someone who is proud seeks his own welfare. Think of the Pharisee who said, “O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity; greedy, dishonest, adulterous” (Lk. 18:11). It is hard for someone who is proud to ask for help, to ask for guidance.

Nicodemus is a good example of somebody who is humble and sees in Jesus someone bigger than himself. He sees in Jesus a man full of love, wisdom, kindness, joy and truth, he sees an opportunity to be better in every way and he is open to talk with Jesus. In those conversations, Jesus brings Nicodemus to the full truth, that he needs to be born of water and spirit to inherit eternal life (Jn. 3:3-16). It is a transforming new reality based in love.

In your life, what has been the biggest gift that you have received or been given? Is it your kids, your spouse, your parents, your friends? What has God done for you? Do you feel like Jesus came into the world just for you? These questions help us all to think of the many blessings we have received and we take them for granted.

Jesus is the gift from the father for the whole world. The Church is the gift of Jesus for all of us. We are called also to be the gift of love in our surroundings. In the places we work, even in the places that we go to exercise, every day is an opportunity for us to share love with others, without expecting anything in return. Remember love is free. It is a gift of oneself to the other. Let's take the example of Jesus and walk from sin into grace, from darkness into light.