Laetare Sunday (4th Sunday of Lent)

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Today, March 14, 2021, is Laetare Sunday, a time to exult, despite the sin and brokenness in each of us and in our world. *"Rejoice,"* for God does not desire us to wallow in hopelessness.

In John's Gospel, verse 3:16, we read, *"God so loved the world,"* although in subsequent passages, there is judgement and even condemnation. Above all, though, there is God's immense love and faithfulness. We learn that God created and loves us and the world in all its beauty, splendor, and diversity. Through God's love, the Son was sent to lead all to truth, light, and goodness while at the same time shielding creation from darkness and sin. All are God's handiwork called and empowered to enhance the beauty and majesty of the world.

In this Gospel, John 3:14-21, God gives us a concrete example of an individual who was searching for light and truth. Nicodemus, a Pharisee, comes to meet *"the teacher,"* Jesus, in the darkness for fear of being seen by the people. He risked his very life and reputation to encounter Jesus who then told Nicodemus *"the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."*

We encounter Nicodemus again at the end of the Gospel as he assisted with Jesus' burial. Now having seen Jesus *"lifted up,"* Nicodemus walked into the light and saw the possibility and promise of new life.

What are the challenges this Gospel presents to each of us today?

1. Can we see the mystery of God in all creation? What are we called to do to protect our fragile world?
2. How do we see ourselves as God's handiwork? Does this concept strengthen us to love and appreciate ourselves and others?
3. Do we have the courage of Nicodemus to seek good not evil, light not darkness, and truth not falsehood?
4. How are we reflecting on our own Lenten sacrifice as we journey with the whole world to the cross?

"Rejoice." See in Jesus the possibility and promise of new life! *"Rejoice, exult!"*

[Readings for Laetare Sunday](#)