

4th Sunday in Lent (b) 10th March 2024

Introduction

*leader: Greet the people and name the Sunday of the Year (see above)
Acknowledge visitors and welcome them.
Remind everyone that there will be refreshments ???
Announce the theme of the liturgy (see next)*

Theme – Nicodemus is 'enlightened' by Jesus

*leader: Faith means welcoming the love of God in Christ,
which saves us and give us life that lasts.
To reject faith is to condemn ourselves;
to prefer darkness to light.
Darkness, for the gospel writer
is an image of the world's rejection of God's love.
Faith in God's Way affirms
that our world will be ordered in new ways;
of surprising statement of faith,
of honest grieving, for an old world that is ending;
and of astonishing thanksgiving
for a new world that is surely coming to be!
(Announce the opening hymn:)*

Greeting

*presider: Ki te ingoa o te Matua, ☩ o te Tamaiti, o te Wairua Tapu:
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose table we share,
be with us:
or
Good evening/morning and the Lord be with you:
or
Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord,
be with you all:
or
Citizens with the saints and members of God's household, grace and
peace be with you:
all: **And with your spirit.***

Penitential Rite *Invitation to Repentance*

*either (confer with the Projectionist beforehand if you choose the: 'I confess'.)
leader: Gathered together in Christ, let us ask forgiveness with
confidence, for God is gentle and compassionate.
all: **I confess: . . .**
or
leader: Lord Jesus, you call your people to turn away from sin:
- (pause) - Lord, have mercy:
all: **Lord, have mercy:***

leader: *You teach us wisdom and write your truth on our inmost heart:
- (pause) - CHRIST, have mercy:*

all: **CHRIST, have mercy:**

leader: *You forgive sins through the ministry of reconciliation:
- (pause) - Lord, have mercy:*

all: **Lord, have mercy:**

leader: *May almighty God, cleanse us of our sins and through the celebration
of this Eucharist make us worthy to sit at the table of the kingdom.*

all: **Amen**

GLORIA (omitted)

Opening Prayer

leader: *(Kia inoi tatou: ...) O God, rich in mercy, You so loved the world
that , when we were dead in our sins,
You sent Your only Son for our deliverance.
Lifted up from the Earth, he is Light and Life;
exalted upon the cross, he is our Truth and Salvation.
Raise us with Christ and make us rich in good works,
that we may walk as children of light
towards the Easter feast of heaven.
We ask this through Christ, our deliverance and hope.*

all: **Amen.**

Introduction to the first reading: (2 Chronicles 36 : 14 – 16, 19 – 23)

leader: *The fall of Jerusalem and the Persian king, Cyrus, proclaims liberty for the
exiles.*

Introduction to the to the second reading: (Ephesians 2 : 4 – 10)

leader: *From death to Life*

Gospel Acclamation:

all:

Introduction to the gospel reading: (John 3 : 14 – 21)

leader: *Nicodemus seeks out Jesus be night, and the conversation that results.*

Homily Notes (presider)

- *“God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life.” What is the world that God so loved? Is it an ideal place where everyone lives in justice and peace? Is it an Eden where sin is absent and humankind lives in harmony with itself and nature? God would certainly love such a world, but unfortunately it doesn't exist.*
- *Does God love the good things that happen in our world? Justice and peace really do occur. God's beautiful creation is appreciated, is protected and has its harmful effects softened or prevented. This is a world where love among peoples and worship of God actually*

happens. Perhaps God so loves the good things about our world as to send the Son as a reward to those responsible for that goodness?

- *But that is not what the passage says. It says "God loves the world". The world God loves is – this world – the one in which we actually spend our lives. It is a world of injustice and discord as well as of love and cooperation. It is a world where there seems never to be good unmarred by pain, stupidity, selfishness, weakness, hatred, sin and death. The good news is that God loves the world as it is, not as it could be, or should be.*
- *What makes this good news is the fact that we are part of that world so loved by God. We do not have to earn God's love. We have it, bad as we can be, to the extent of God's sending the Son to save us from whatever keeps us from experiencing that love in its fullness. This seems a strange message for Lent, a season to reflect upon repentance and our need for salvation? Shouldn't we be gloomy in order to set off the joy of Easter? Isn't it a few weeks too early to be hearing such incredibly good news?*
- *Later in the passage, there seems to be an opening for a bit of gloom: "Whoever does not believe is already condemned for not believing in the name of God's only Son." Does this mean that we are saved by believing in a single word and condemned for not believing in it? Are all those who do not know the word "Jesus" doomed?*
- *In the Bible, one's name is the equivalent of one's self. To believe in the name of Jesus is not to make declarations regarding how the neighbours called him; it is to accept what he really is, without ever hearing the word "Jesus" (the condition of most men and women alive today).*
- *What is he, then? That brings us back to the theme of his words to Nicodemus. He is the love of God made present among us. He is the source of eternal life, offered to the whole world because God loves the whole world. To accept his name is to live in the love of God, not refusing any of the gifts God offers us, whether we know the donor or not.*
- *Lent is the season when we prepare to renew our baptismal commitment in solidarity with those being baptised at Easter. It is a time of preparation to rededicate ourselves to proclaiming to the world the good news that God indeed loves us now, here, as we really are.*
- *God's love will not wait or depend upon my repentance. That love will not make any demand upon me except that I accept it. That love will not even be overcome by my death, and so it is the source of eternal life.*
- *Can I really believe that? I can easily believe that I must repent, but it's harder for me to believe that God loves me whether or not I do*

anything to earn it. God loves me not as I could be or should be, but as I am. Even I don't do that.

- *The Word of the Scriptures reveals us as being between two worlds. The old world – imaged in the first reading as 'exile in Babylon' and suffering at the hand of a merciless king who reflects the exhaustion of God's mercy – and a new world – where God's mercy is given through unlikely agents like the Persian ruler, Cyrus; and Jesus of Nazareth from obscure Galilee.*
- *In our liturgy we stand on the threshold of a promised new world where the spirit of God acts. We have few occasions for hosting the ambiguity where God's newness is given. For most of us the moment of worship is the only place for such experience.*
- *It is presumptuous and awesome that in the ordinary round of our lives we dare to voice the Word of God's promised newness! In a mix of weariness and confidence – partly out of habit and partly in passionate hope – we respond: "Thanks be to God" as the Eucharistic Prayer leads us beyond the threshold to where the Spirit of God brings the transforming newness for which we hunger.*

Creed / Statement of Faith

Intercessions - 4th Week in Lent [Sun 10th – Sat 16th March 2024]

invitation to pray:

leader: Friends in Christ, let us pray that our lives may remain centred on God and that we may offer convincing witness to the message of life that lasts:

1: *For members of the Church, that we may prefer the foolishness of the cross to the wisdom of the world and seek true happiness in God alone:
- (pause) - God of True Wisdom, hear us:*

*all: **God of true Wisdom, hear us.***

2: *For the nations and peoples of world. May people be free to believe the gospel: - (pause) – God of freedom, hear us:*

*all: **God of freedom, hear us.***

3: *For all life to be treated with dignity and respect, especially the lives of the elderly and the vulnerable. May we as a people respect the dignity of all life: - (pause) – God of Life, hear us:*

*all: **God of Life, hear us.***

4: *For those preparing to receive the sacraments. May they become spiritual people, striving to do what is holy and just:
- (pause) - God of Holiness, hear us:*

*all: **God of Holiness, hear us.***

5: *For the sick: we pray for: . . (refer to the parish newsletter)
Bless them for they share in Christ's passion through their suffering:
- (pause) - God of Well-being, hear us:*

*all: **God of Well-being, hear us.***

6: *For those who have died: . . . (refer to the parish newsletter)
and those whose anniversaries occur about now: . . . (refer to the parish newsletter)
Number them among Your saints:
- (pause) - Lord of the Living and the Dead, hear us:*

*all: **Lord of the Living and the Dead, hear us.***

Concluding Prayer:

*leader: God of Graciousness, give answer to our prayers in Your great kindness.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord:*

*all: **Amen***

(If no priest, the commentator introduces Lord's Prayer.)

Prayer over the Gifts

presider: (Kia inoi tatou: ...) With joy, Lord, we present to You the sacrifice that brings us eternal healing.

Grant in Your goodness

that we may celebrate this mystery with faith and offer it worthily for the salvation of the world.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*all: **Amen***

Preface *(from Mass of Reconciliation I)*

presider: The Lord be with you.

*all: **And also with you.***

presider: Lift up your hearts.

*all: **We lift them up to the Lord.***

presider: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*all: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.***

presider: It is truly right and just,

our duty and our salvation,

always and everywhere to give you thanks,

holy Father, compassionate and good.

Though we are sinners, You constantly offer us pardon and ask us to trust in Your mercy alone.

Time after time, when we broke Your covenants,

You did not cast us aside; but through the incarnation of Jesus, Your Son,

You bound the human family to Yourself

with a new and unbreakable bond.

In Christ You give Your people

a season of reconciliation and grace;

a time to draw new breath for our journey back to You,

a time to open our hearts to Your Spirit

and respond to the needs of all.

In wonder and gratitude we join our voices

with the choirs of heaven,

and we proclaim with joy

the power of Your love

and sing the endless hymn of Your glory:

*all: **Holy holy holy!***

EUCARISTIC PRAYER – for Masses of Reconciliation I

Memorial Acclamation

(the Eucharistic Prayer ends with the great 'AMEN')

Introduction to the Lord's Prayer

either

*leader: With trust in God, who nourishes us in the hour of need,
let us pray as Jesus taught us:*

or

leader: Let us pray for the coming of God's realm as Jesus taught us.

or

*leader: The Father has forgiven us, let us forgive our neighbour from the heart
as we say:*

*all: **Our Father, . . .***

*presider: Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil;
graciously grant peace in our days,
that by the help of Your mercy,
we may be always freed from sin
and safe from all distress,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

*all: **For the kingdom, the power and the glory are Yours,
now and for ever. Amen.***

Sign of Peace

*presider: Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles:
'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you'.
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church
and grant us the peace and unity of your Realm,
where you live, now and always:*

*all: **Amen.***

presider: The peace of the Lord be with you:

*all: **And with your spirit.***

leader: Let us offer each other a sign of peace:

Lamb of God

*all: **Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us (x2)
Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.***

*presider: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
who by the will of the Father
and the work of the Holy Spirit,
through your death gave life to the world;
free us by this your most holy Body and Blood
from all our sins and from every evil:
keep us always faithful to your commandments
and never let us be parted from you.*

*all: **Amen***

either

presider: Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

or

presider: This is the bread come down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will never die.

This is the cup of eternal life; whoever drinks of it will live forever:

*all: **Lord, I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof, but only say the Word and my soul shall be healed.***

Holy Communion

*presider: Ko te Tinana o te Karaiti:
(Ko nga Toto o te Karaiti:)*

Prayer after Communion

*leader: (Kia inoi tatou: ...) Lord God,
You enlighten everyone
who comes into this world;
fill our hearts with the light of Your grace,
that our thoughts may always be pleasing to You
and our love for You be always sincere.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*all: **Amen.***

(an opportunity for announcements/notices etc. . . .)

Dismissal

*leader: We are sent; in the name of God,
whose agents of mercy,
bring us a graced future;
we are sent in the name of Jesus,
in whose exaltation
we are lifted out of our hopelessness;
we are sent in the name of the holy Spirit,
the Light of our inner selves;
to bring light, justice and peace
to all we meet, until we gather again:*

*all: **Amen***

The Blessing

*presider: Kia whakapaingia koutou e te Atua kaha rawa,
e te Matua, e te Tamaiti ✠ e te Wairua Tapu.*

*all: **Amene***

leader: The Mass has ended, go in peace.

*all: **Thanks be to God.***