

Homily: 4th Sunday of Lent: Cycle B: 2024: 2 Chron 36: 14-16, 19-23; Ps. 137; Eph 2: 4-10; Jn 3: 14-21

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son”

1. **God loves everyone so much that He wants us to be with Him forever, and in this passing earthly life to give us the grace to live a life in intimate friendship with Him.** He wants no one to perish, but all to be saved - but we must cooperate! His love is always reaching out to us – see the Divine Mercy devotion. The reality is: we all have difficulties to face in our lives: *maybe our marriage is not the greatest/dysfunctional; maybe we have problems with certain family members or with a certain child; maybe some of the people we love refuse to go to Mass; maybe we struggle to make God and our Faith the number one priority in our lives, to pray and live our Catholic faith on a daily basis; maybe we hate our job; maybe we struggle with addictions of various sorts which vary in their degree of sinfulness: watching television/movies/ listening to music and playing videogames that promote evil things, going online/social media too much(the key word is **too much**), overeating, buying things we don't need with money we could use to help others, gambling away money we should be using for better things, abusing alcohol or drugs - be it legal or illegal, reading things we shouldn't read, engaging in immoral sexual activity or looking at pornography - which is a cancer afflicting so many in our society and seriously harming or even destroying so many relationships and marriages, etc. Whatever addiction, sin or struggles we are facing, the Lord's mercy and grace is the answer to all human problems. But is it “too good to be true?” Or “too simplistic a solution?” **Do we think that?***
2. **How do we tap into the Fountain of God's mercy: the source of all that is good, to heal us?** Mysteriously it is by uniting everything we experience with Jesus on the **Cross**. To develop the habit of **uniting** all our struggles/ sufferings with Him throughout the day, and to make a conscious effort to turn away from sin. **Do we doubt his love for us?** Do we think we have gotten a raw deal in life? Are we mad at God for having taken a loved one or friend away in death? **Look at the Crucifix and realize how much God loves each of one of us!** He died for

our salvation! What a price He paid for our sins! Jesus said to Nicodemus: “*Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life.*” **The Cross is THE source of God’s mercy.** It is the sign of His infinite love for us. This is why in **The Chaplet of Divine Mercy** (pray it daily), which is rooted in the mystery Jesus’s offering of His life on the Cross for our sins, we unite ourselves with Him and pray: *Eternal Father, I offer to You, the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world. And for the sake of His sorrowful passion have mercy on us and on the whole world.* **But have we been running from the Cross?** We all do at times; some more than others hoping we could accept the Christian way without the suffering, without the dying to self, without the call to conversion from a worldly way of life to the standards of God and our Catholic Faith.

3. Then remember “*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. Whoever believes in Him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe in Him has already been condemned.*” What does “belief” mean in this context? Just intellectual agreement or does it mean more? Well, we receive the context in the next few lines of the Gospel. “... *This is the verdict that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may clearly be seen as done in God.*” Remember Adam and Eve after they sinned? They hid from God - as we tend to do when we sin. Remember Cain after he murdered His brother Abel? He tried to cop-out and say he wasn’t his brother’s keeper. Remember Judas going out into the darkness after he betrayed Jesus? **The Divine Physician is waiting to help us with His remedy of mercy.** And the place we most receive that gift is in the Sacrament of Mercy: **Confession.** We all have a great opportunity with our Lenten penance service next Sunday at 4 pm with 6 priests to make a good Confession. God bless you. ✠