

The things of the past shall not be remembered or come to mind. Instead, there shall always be rejoicing and happiness in what I create; For I create Jerusalem to be a joy and its people to be a delight.
Isaiah 65

Fourth Week of Lent: March 18 - 24, 2012

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The Fourth Week of Lent

In many of our parishes, on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent, at least one Mass will use the Cycle A readings for the RCIA program. On the **Fourth Sunday**, that includes **John's gospel** of the man born blind. (For more information, see [Praying the Gospels of Weeks 3, 4 and 5](#).)

For the rest of us, on the **Fourth Sunday of Lent** we read Jesus' words to Nicodemus in the **Fourth Gospel**. Jesus will be lifted up on the cross to heal us from the power of sin and death. This gospel, which is written like a trial, tells us the verdict. "For 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."

Monday is the **Solemnity of Saint Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, with its own special readings.

Our gospels this week are all from **John's Gospel**. After two days of healing stories, the opposition against Jesus builds. In Cana, in Galilee, Jesus heals the son of a royal official. Back down in Jerusalem, he heals a man who was sick for 38 years, incurring the wrath of his enemies because he did it on the Sabbath. Because of this, and because he called God his Father, they now plot a way to kill him. Jesus says his opponents do not want to come to him for life. He calls God his father and says, "I have testimony greater than John's." Unafraid of his opponents, Jesus goes to Jerusalem for a feast and openly tells people that he has come from God. They did not arrest him then, "for his hour

Daily Prayer This Week

The gospels this week make it very clear toward the end of the week that Jesus faced opposition that couldn't accept who he is. We see that Jesus comes to lay down his life that we might live. So, this week of Lent is an important time for us to ask ourselves if there are any parts of our hearts, any of our patterns, that oppose Jesus and his desire to give us life. This kind of honesty can transform our lives. It can allow the grace of God to bring reconciliation and healing we might not have imagined.

Even if it hasn't been easy to get really engaged with Lent so far, we can still make a beginning, even now. The key is openness and desire. If we can feel any attraction, any sign that the Lord is possibly drawing us, then the Lord can work with us - no matter what resistance or fear we might also be experiencing. All we have to do is act out of these desires and simply ask the Lord for the grace to help us be more honest and more open to what he is offering us. For example, we can ask for the grace to examine our consciences more thoroughly. We could try a different approach to facing any resistance we might have to the Lord's working in us. We might not commit the big sins, but we may not have examined what we fail to do. Who am I failing to love, to forgive, to be generous to? From whom am I withholding affection, care, reconciliation? Where can I live more

had not yet come.” Thinking they know where Jesus is from (in both senses: where he lived now and his origin in heaven), his enemies insist that Jesus can't be a prophet: “Look and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”

On the **Fifth Sunday of Lent**, one Mass in our parishes will probably celebrate the last of the “Scrutinies” for the RCIA program using the **John's Gospel** about the raising of Lazarus. For those at the other Masses, we will also use **John's Gospel**. Jesus says that the “hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” However, he describes this glory in a surprising way, which explains who he is for us and who we are called to be: “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” “Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be.”

honestly, with more integrity? How might I proactively change my own personal patterns of escape with patterns of care for others?

It is a time of grace when we can experience moments of “recognition,” or self-understanding. But it is not a grace to beat up on ourselves or become self-absorbed in our own guilt. It is grace to feel grateful to the Lord for showing us obstacles to the life he is offering us. It is grace to feel our spirits lighten as we feel drawn to greater freedom and peace. It is incredible grace when we are drawn to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This week, let us give thanks to the Lord who deeply desires our greater freedom and joy. As we go to bed each night, let us thank the Lord for what we saw that day and renew our desires for the next day of grace.

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