

FAITH @Home

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Diocese of Waterford & Lismore

Celebrating and supporting faith, hope and love in the heart of the family!



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Year B 4TH SUNDAY IN LENT: LAETARE SUNDAY

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION AVAILABLE ALSO

Sunday Mass Readings

First Reading:

2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 136(137):1-6

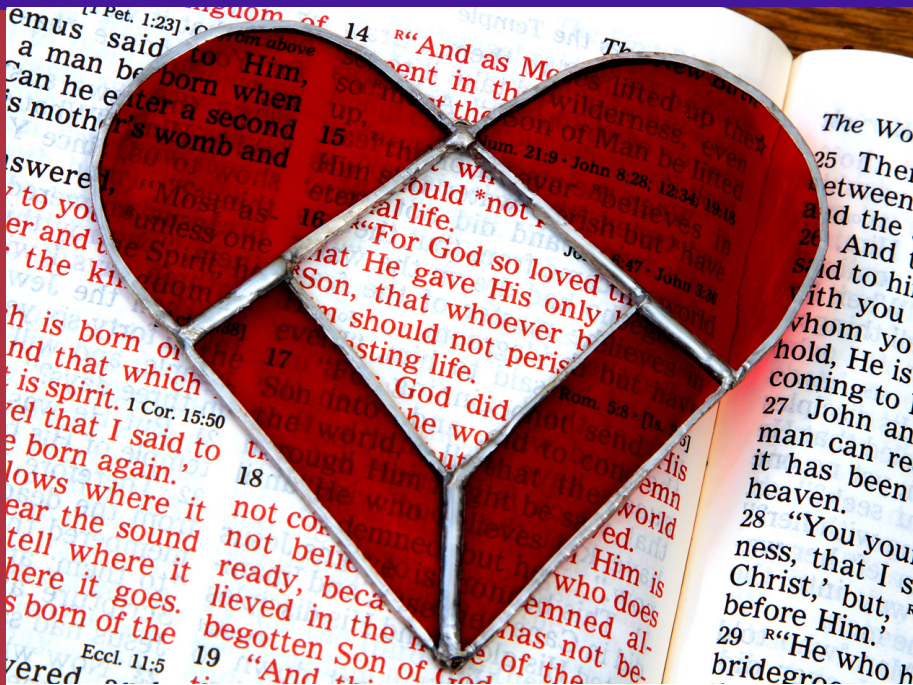
Second Reading:

Ephesians 2:4-10

Gospel:

John 3:14-21

"Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life."



Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) on the readings for children.

Pray

In the Gospel today we find ourselves with Jesus and Nicodemus, hearing one of the most famous lines from the Gospels, John 3:16

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- Have you spent time lately thinking about the sacrifice Jesus made for you and just how much He loves you?
- Today is Laetare Sunday - coming from the word "rejoice". Let's pause during our Lenten journey to remember the Good News of God's plan of salvation for our lives, to try to immerse ourselves in his love and mercy, and rejoice in so great a gift!
- Jesus also talks about light and darkness - are there any areas of darkness and sin in our lives that we need to bring to the Lord in confession, and ask for his healing and mercy?

Talk

In this week's Gospel, we hear Jesus answer the questions of Nicodemus, telling him that the Son of Man will be raised up so that those who believe in him will have eternal life.

- Some people are afraid of the dark - ordinary things can look unfamiliar and even a little scary in the dark. Have you ever had that experience?
- What kind of lights do we use to show us the way? Think of as many examples as you can e.g. headlights, torches
- Jesus wants to shine light into our hearts so that we can see the muddy stains from our sins and bring them to him for cleansing and healing! Think about going to confession this week if it's possible!

Family Challenge!

Jesus speaks a lot in this Gospel about Light and Darkness. As a family this week, try to gather some evening for prayer, firstly sitting in darkness and then lighting a candle to represent Jesus the Light of the World. Notice what you can see by candle-light that you could not see in the dark, and thank God for His light in our lives.

THE REASON FOR OUR JOY

The fourth Sunday of Lent is sometimes called Laetare Sunday. Laetare is a Latin word that means "rejoice." Traditionally, Sundays are named after the first word of the liturgy's opening antiphon. On this Sunday, the antiphon is taken from the book of the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 66:10-11). Even as we observe our Lenten sacrifices, we rejoice in anticipation of the joy that will be ours at Easter.

Today's Gospel reading is taken from John's Gospel. It consists of two parts. The first part is the final sentence of Jesus' reply to Nicodemus, the Pharisee who approached Jesus at night. Nicodemus acknowledged Jesus as someone who had come from God and seemed to want to be a follower of Jesus. Jesus greeted Nicodemus with the observation that one must be born from above to see the Kingdom of God. The dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus that followed was about the meaning of this phrase. Nicodemus misunderstood Jesus at every point, but there was no animosity in the questions he posed to Jesus.

In the part of the conversation with Nicodemus in today's Gospel, Jesus referred to an incident reported in the Old Testament. When the Israelites grumbled against the Lord during their sojourn in the desert, God sent venomous serpents to punish them for their complaints. The Israelites repented and asked Moses to pray for them. The Lord heard Moses' prayer and instructed him to make a bronze serpent and mount it on a pole. All who had been bitten by a serpent and then looked upon the bronze serpent were cured. By recalling this story, Jesus alludes to the salvation that would be accomplished through his death and Resurrection.

The second part of today's Gospel is a theological reflection on Jesus' words to Nicodemus. The Gospel of John is known for this kind of reflection offered within the narrative. The words of the Evangelist are in continuity with the words of the prologue to John's Gospel. In these reflections, John elaborates on a number of themes that are found in his Gospel: light and darkness, belief and unbelief, good and evil, salvation and condemnation.

In John's reflection, we find an observation about human sinfulness. Jesus is the light that has come into the world, but people preferred the darkness. We wish to keep our sins hidden, even from God. Jesus has come into the world to reveal our sins so that they may be forgiven. This is the Good News; it is the reason for our rejoicing in this season of Lent and throughout our lives.

Loyola Press - Sunday Connection

Check
this
out



PAVING THE WAY HOME

A Catholic online apostolate based in Ireland to support the official teachings of the Catholic Church through contemporary forms of media, which aims to bring clarity and truth to what the Catholic Church teaches instead of the confusion and misinterpretation that people often associate with it. Paving The Way Home wishes to discuss and explain the beauty and richness of what the Catholic Church teaches and why it teaches it.



SO LOVED BY GOD

John 3:16 - it's a sign we see at matches, so much so that you might be forgiven for thinking that John was a great sportsman who scored an incredible 3:16 in an unforgettable game! But instead, the guys who hold up this placard want to remind us something even more incredible, something we should never forget, that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that whoever believes in Him may not be lost, but have eternal life. This is the Good News of our Faith - this is the most basic belief Christians share. Even though our world is broken, even though many are lost, even though it seems like the darkness is so dark and so deep, the light will never be overcome. Jesus is the Light of the World - that's not just a nice cliché or a comforting phrase. Jesus came to be lifted up (on a cross), to draw all humanity to himself (through His sacrifice) and He was raised to new life. Death, sin, darkness, brokenness - all were defeated by Him and in Him and through Him. Suffering can have meaning when united with His. The lost can find hope. The sinner can find mercy. The broken can find healing. And that's Good News, the best news!

Maybe you're good at memorising scripture. Maybe you've never even tried. This week, try to memorise John 3:16 and remind yourself of it. Maybe even write it on a post-it note, or frame it, so that you'll remember it when you need a reminder of just how much you are worth to God! "Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life."

▶ Mark Hart: The 4 Reasons God became Man
▶ In Christ Alone - Keith & Kristyn Getty

To the Heights Youth Resource also available



Family Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us so much that you sent your only Son, so that whoever believes in Him will not be lost, but will have eternal life. Amen

EVENTS

40 Hours of Adoration for Vocations: at locations around the Diocese in February and March. Check www.waterfordlismore.ie for more details

"Rooted in Christ" - Cherished Catholic Women's Ministry Retreat: Glencomeragh House, Kilsheelan, Co. Tipperary E91H584. April 26th - 28th. Cost: €220 Join us for our third annual Cherished Retreat as we discover our dignity as women of God, rooted in Christ! Mass | Adoration | Rosary | Healing Service Confession | Testimonies | Creative Workshops | Fellowship | Tea & Chats! For more info: Shauna (087) 1378364. To book: info@holymission.ie or call 052 6133181 (Age 18+)

ARISE Catholic Family Festival: May Bank Holiday Weekend in Tramore, Co. Waterford. Great speakers, workshops, games, catechesis and activities for all the family. More info on www.arisefamilyfestival.ie

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