

**FIRST READING**

When we were dead through sin, Christ brought us to life.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians

2:4-10

**B**rothers and sisters:

God was merciful!

We were dead because of sins,

but God loved us so much that he made us alive with Christ,  
and God's kindness is what saves you.

God raised us from death to life with Christ Jesus,

and he has given us a place beside Christ in heaven above.

God did this so that in the future world he could show

how truly good and kind he is to us  
because of what Christ Jesus has done.

You were served by faith in God

who treats us better than we deserve.

This is God's gift to you,

and not anything you have done on your own.

It isn't something you have earned,

so there is nothing you can brag about.

God planned for us to do good things

and to live as he has always wanted us to live.

That's why he sent Christ to make us what we are.

The word of the Lord.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

25:4-5abc, 6 and 7 cd

*R. (6a) Remember your mercies, O Lord.*

Show me your paths

and teach me to follow;

guide me by your truth

and instruct me.

You keep me safe.

*R. Remember your mercies, O Lord.*

Please, Lord, remember,  
you have always  
been patient and kind.  
Show how truly kind you are  
and remember me.

*R. Remember your mercies, O Lord.*

## **VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL**

John 3:16

*R. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

God loved the world so much, he gave his only Son,  
that all who believe in him might have eternal life.

*R. Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## **GOSPEL**

God sent his Son into the world, that we might be saved through him.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to John 3:16-17

**J**esus told Nicodemus:

“God loved the people of this world so much  
that he gave his only Son,  
so that everyone who has faith in him  
will have eternal life and never die.

God did not send his Son into the world to condemn its people.  
He sent him to save them!”

The gospel of the Lord.

## Fourth Sunday of Lent — Cycle B

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, we feel your love and care every day. We pray and do kind acts to be your signs of love to each other. Thank you for never forgetting about us. We love you. AMEN.

**Readings:** 2 Chron. 36:14-16, 19-23; Ps 137:1-6; Eph 2:4-10; John 3:14-21

The Scripture passages this week tell us of God's unwavering love—no matter how disobedient we are! It is true: The stories in the Bible are of God's relationship/friendship with us. We see clearly that God's attitude to us is not "I AM BIGGER and STRONGER THAN YOU." It is: I will love you forever, even when you don't love me!!

This is a hard, if not impossible, truth. Most of us love those who love us and dislike those who don't like us.. Why would anyone, much less God, love people even when they do wrong? In fact, we know of many stories in the Hebrew (Old Testament) Scriptures, that tell of unfaithfulness, disobedience and unbelief. (Like: Adam and Eve; Cain; Isarelites; Moses; David; Jonah, etc.)

The passage from Ephesians states: "...We are God's handiwork." Then, the gospel of John tells us that God sent Jesus because of love: "God so loved the world that God sent God's only Son..." John makes it clear, by linking believing in God's Son—God's ultimate gift of love—to eternal life. Nicodemus, like us, doesn't understand fully the gift of love Jesus is. The Gospel of John uses the image of LIGHT to show how we prefer to "be in the dark" about the true abundance of God's love. At some level, deep within ourselves, we want to believe in unconditional love but it is hard to come out into the light.

We begin to realize if we really believe in God's unconditional love, then we will LOVE all the time and everyone. WOW. Is that possible? Yes. Because once we do something over-and-over, it becomes more natural. Jesus loved, over-and-over, because he believed in God's unconditional love. So, if we are "God's handiwork," we must be natural lovers when we are at our best. That's why, during Lent, we look around and within to see if there are things, attitudes we are doing that aren't loving. When we discover something: Then we repent—change—and start over. What helps us is God's GRACE—little energy bursts!! GRACE nudges us; Supports us; Leads us toward being the loving 'handiwork' of God.

Heaven, is being filled with GRACE and LOVE for all eternity. It isn't a place, as much as it is a WAY OF BEING, that truly reflects God in each of us. Heaven is the fullness of LIGHT and shows us God, face-to-face!

### **Activities:**

In your Lenten Booklet, turn to page 4. Write the word, LIGHT. Draw a few pictures of different lights: Lamps, traffic lights; flood lights; yard lights, etc. What do each of these lights do? They make it easier for people to see and to act accordingly. The energy to make lights work comes from a source, a generator. Well, in a certain way, God is the generator and Jesus is the LIGHT. We see and act in love, because GRACE comes into us

*(Continued on page 2)*

just like energy comes from the generator into Jesus. Jesus is more than just JESUS. He is the LIGHT of GOD. And Jesus gave us the power to be lights, too, by sharing GRACE. Write the word, GRACE on page 3.

**Finally**, have the children form a circle for prayer. If it is possible, light a small candle and put it in the center of the circle. Explain: Each person is going to bless the person next to them, in a special way as part of the prayer. They will follow your example.

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, we believe you are the LIGHT of the world and the LIGHT in our hearts. Helps us to keep the light of your love in our hearts every minute of every day. AMEN. (Then, turn to the person next to you, and say, while making a small 'sign of the cross' on their forehead: "You are the Light of Jesus. Shine bright this week." (Be ready to help each child repeat the phrase.)

Then sing: "This Little Light Of Mine."

This little light of mine  
I'm going to let it shine  
Oh, this little light of mine  
I'm going to let it shine  
This little light of mine  
I'm going to let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Ev'ry where I go  
I'm going to let it shine  
Oh, ev'ry where I go  
I'm going to let it shine  
Ev'ry where I go  
I'm going to let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

All in my house  
I'm going to let it shine  
Oh, all in my house  
I'm going to let it shine  
All in my house  
I'm going to let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

I'm not going to make it shine  
I'm just going to let it shine  
I'm not going to make it shine  
I'm just going to let it shine  
I'm not going to make it shine  
I'm just going to let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Out in the dark  
I'm going to let it shine  
Oh, out in the dark  
I'm going to let it shine  
Out in the dark  
I'm going to let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine