

PRAYERS FOR LENT 2021, NO. 4

GOSPEL PASSAGE: JN 3: 14–21 (ESV)

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God So Loved the World

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹ But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

QUESTIONS TO PONDER ...

1. Nicodemus came quietly at night, secretly to listen to and learn from Jesus. When we give Him quiet time, what is the Lord, who “so loved the world,” saying to us?
2. Jesus speaks of “not condemning the world, but saving it.” What do I need to call on Jesus’s mercy for? What do I need Him to forgive this Lent?



EXTRACT FROM *PATRIS CORDE*

(Pope Francis’s letter on the Year of St Joseph 2020/21)

Joseph accepted Mary unconditionally. He trusted in the angel’s words. “... Even though he does not understand the bigger picture, he makes a decision to protect Mary’s good name, her dignity and her life. In his hesitation about how best to act, God helped him by enlightening his judgment.”



Often in life, things happen whose meaning we do not understand. Our first reaction is frequently one of disappointment and rebellion. Joseph set aside his own ideas in order to accept the course of events and, mysterious as they seemed, to embrace them, take responsibility for them and make them part of his own history. ...

Joseph is certainly not passively resigned, but courageously and firmly proactive. In our own lives, acceptance and welcome can be an expression of the Holy Spirit’s gift of fortitude. Only the Lord can give us the strength needed to accept life as it is, with all its contradictions, frustrations and disappointments. ...

Just as God told Joseph: “Son of David, do not be afraid!”, so he seems to tell us: “Do not be afraid!” We need to set aside all anger and disappointment, and to embrace the way things are, even when they do not turn out as we wish. Not with mere resignation but with hope and courage. ...

Joseph’s attitude encourages us to accept and welcome others as they are, without exception, and to show special concern for the weak, for God chooses what is weak. He is the “Father of orphans and protector of widows,” who commands us to love the stranger in our midst. I like to think that it was from Saint Joseph that Jesus drew inspiration for the parable of the prodigal son and the merciful father.
(from §4 *An Accepting Father*)

POPE FRANCIS'S PRAYER FOR PEACE — MOSUL, IRAQ.

- *If God is the God of life — for so He is — then it is wrong for us to kill our brothers and sisters in His Name.*
- *If God is the God of peace — for so He is — then it is wrong for us to wage war in His Name.*
- *If God is the God of love — for so He is — then it is wrong for us to hate our brothers and sisters.*



MOST HIGH GOD, LORD OF ALL AGES, You created the world in love and never cease to shower your blessings upon your creatures. From beyond the sea of suffering and death, from beyond all temptations to violence, injustice and unjust gain, you accompany your sons and daughters with a Father's tender love.

Yet we men and women, spurning your gifts and absorbed by all-too-worldly concerns have often forgotten your counsels of peace and harmony. We were concerned only with ourselves and our narrow interests. Indifferent to you and to others, we barred the door to peace. ... In the Book of Jonah, the inhabitants of Nineveh heeded the words of your prophet and found salvation in repentance. Lord, we now entrust to you the many victims of man's hatred for man. We too implore your forgiveness and beg the grace of repentance: *Kyrie eleison! Kyrie eleison! Kyrie eleison!*

Lord our God, ... teach us to realize that you have entrusted to us your plan of love, peace and reconciliation, and charged us to carry it

out in our time, in the brief span of our earthly lives. Make us recognize that only in this way, ... [can] hearts torn by grief be healed. Help us not to pass our time in promoting our selfish concerns, whether as individuals or as groups, but in serving your loving plan. And whenever we go astray, grant that we may heed the voice of true men and women of God and repent in due time, lest we be once more overwhelmed by destruction and death.

To you we entrust all those whose span of earthly life was cut short by the violent hand of their brothers and sisters; we also pray to you for those who caused such harm to their brothers and sisters. May they repent, touched by the power of your mercy.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

IN HONOUR OF THE SORROWS OF THE BL. VIRGIN MARY

Most holy and afflicted Virgin, Queen of Martyrs, you stood beneath the cross, witnessing the agony of your dying Son. Look with a mother's tenderness and pity on me, who kneel before you. I venerate your sorrows and I place my requests with filial confidence in the sanctuary of your wounded heart.

Present them, I beseech you, on my behalf to Jesus Christ, through the merits of His own most sacred passion and death, together with your sufferings at the foot of the cross. Through the united efficacy of both, obtain the granting of my petition. To whom shall I have recourse in my wants and miseries if not to you, Mother of Mercy? You have drunk so deeply of the chalice of your Son, you can compassionate our sorrows.

Holy Mother, your soul was pierced by a sword of sorrow at the sight of the passion of your divine Son. Intercede for me and obtain for me from our Lord {*mention your petition*}, if it be for His honour and glory, and for my good. Amen.

