

Reflection Thursday 4th Week Lent 2022

Moses pleaded with God for the waywardness and infidelity of the people he was leading because he had come to love them by sharing in the journey they were making together. He believed that deep down God loved them. Moses appealed to that love and was heard. Here lies the story of our Lenten preparation. Jesus was sent to journey with us for 30 years during which he leaned to love us and came to realise, like Moses, how much God, his Father, loved us too. He appealed to the Father's love, like Moses, to save us from the fate that we deserved. And, herein lies a lesson. Though innocent of the people's sins and waywardness, Jesus not only stood up for us and appealed for mercy, he also accepted the suffering that is a consequence of our sinfulness. If we truly enter into the Lenten journey this year, we will come to realise that the same is being asked of us. The war in Ukraine has contributed to the rise in prices and the cost of living. Not only will that affect us in many ways but we are also called to be more generous with what we have in helping those in much greater need. This means not just sharing some of our excess but some of what we have, which demands real self-denial and going without.

Pope Francis: *Holiness isn't a "human achievement," but "a gift we receive."* It is not a life plan made up only of effort and renunciation, but **the joyful discovery** of being God's beloved sons and daughters. And this will fill you with joy which is the principal proclamation of **an unprecedented happiness**. We are holy because God, who is the Holy One, comes to dwell in our lives. He gives holiness to us.

Christian joy is not a "fleeting emotion" or mere optimism. It is the certainty of being able to face every situation under God's loving gaze, **with the courage and strength that come from Him**. Without joy, faith becomes a rigorous and oppressive exercise. For there is no holiness without joy!