

Homily 4th Sunday Lent Laetare Sunday Year B 2024

Although we are encouraged throughout Lent to seek God's mercy for your sins and failings and ask for mercy for the sins of others, and rightly so, Laetare Sunday reminds us of the true purpose of Lent. Lent offers us an opportunity to rebuild our lives. The light of Jesus is offered to us and, in so far as we welcome his light into our lives, Jesus will show us the how best to do this.

John Foley, SJ wrote the following poem to encourage us to open ourselves to the light of Christ.

*Once there was a city built in the sunlight.
Warmth and laughter abounded.
Memories of day would remain every night
until the sun could return.
Fear one morning said light is too bright.
Too much truth can be seen.
How can we seem what we say we are
if light the intruder is here?
So, walls went up and a ban on all windows
and nothing of day could remain.
The city said, you have left us, O sun.
In the darkness we have gone blind.
But the sun outside still shed its light,
and its warmth and its laughter and love.
It lightened the walls
and gave warmth to their chill,
while within, the soul bored a hole.
Into it poured a single beam,
a sunlight of laughter and care.
Softly, silently, almost like spring,
love opened and blossomed and grew.
Listen to the light.
Listen to God this Lent.
Let love open and blossom and grow.*

It is no coincidence that we celebrate our mothers on this Sunday of light and rejoicing because they have been a constant light, opening us to God's love, laughter and his presence. If we reflect carefully, we will come to see God's presence and God's light in their smile and their happiness as well as in their suffering and pain. We are made in the image of God and, for most of us, our mothers have been the best models of what this means.

Mom is the proof God exists.

A Mother's love is something
that no one can explain,
it is made of deep devotion
and of sacrifice and pain,
it is endless and unselfish
and enduring come what may
for nothing can destroy it
or take that love away . . .

It is patient and forgiving
when all others are forsaking,
and it never fails or falters
even though the heart is breaking . . .
It believes beyond believing
when the world around condemns,
And it glows with all the beauty
of the rarest, brightest gems . . .
It is far beyond defining,
it defies all explanation,
and it still remains a secret
like the mysteries of creation . . .
A many splendored miracle
man cannot understand
and another wondrous evidence
of God's tender, guiding hand.