



## Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 10, 2024  
Eternal Life and Love

### As We Gather

We hear today of eternal life that is given to us because of God's great love for us, shown to us in perhaps the most famous Bible verse, John 3:16. This verse speaks of God's genuine love for us and the world shown in Jesus' death on the cross for us. The love of God never ends. God's love is present here and now and extends into eternal life as eternal love. May we be so encouraged by God's love to share it with others. Thanks be to God for such love!

### Invocation

- P** In the name of the Father and of the  $\text{✝}$  Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

### Opening Sentences

John 3:16

- P** God so loved the world,
- C** that He gave His only Son,
- P** that whoever believes in Him should not perish
- C** but have eternal life.
- P** Our Lenten journey leads us to the cross where Jesus gave His life,
- C** and then to the resurrection and eternal life.

### Confession and Absolution

- P** Though Christ has loved us with this genuine love that gives us eternal life, we sometimes ignore His love and refuse to share Christ's love with others. Still, our heavenly Father is merciful, and He invites us to draw near to Him in hope and confidence to ask for His grace.

*Silence for reflection.*

- P** Heavenly Father,
- C** we have sinned against You and against our neighbors. We have not loved You with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not loved our enemies. Forgive us, renew our love, on account of Jesus. Amen.
- P** Jesus Christ was lifted up on the tree of the cross so that we might be forgiven. His genuine love is for the world and is for you. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the  $\text{✝}$  Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen. We are forgiven by the genuine love of Jesus.

### Introit

Psalm 27:3-5; antiphon: v. 1

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;  
though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after:

that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;

he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

## Prayer of the Day

**P** Let us pray. Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

## Holy Gospel

*John 3:14–21*

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the third chapter.

**C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 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. 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. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God.”

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C** **Praise to You, O Christ.**

## Sermon

### Apostles' Creed

**C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life † everlasting. Amen.

## Prayer of the Church

- P** Lord Jesus Christ, as we come before You with our prayers and petitions, we thank You for Your genuine love, and we pray, Jesus, may our hearts be burning
- C** **with more fervent love for You.**
- P** Lord Jesus Christ, show Your love to all those who have experienced broken families, homes, and churches. Surround them with Your love and with people who will love them as You love them. Jesus, may our hearts be burning
- C** **with more fervent love for You.**
- P** Lord Jesus Christ, extend Your love to all those who have abandoned the faith. Strengthen us to lovingly invite them toward Your genuine love for the world. Jesus, may our hearts be burning
- C** **with more fervent love for You.**
- P** Lord Jesus Christ, in Your earthly life You experienced the death of those You loved. Bring Your comfort to all those who are suffering in such grief. Point them to the hope of eternal life with You. Jesus, may our hearts be burning
- C** **with more fervent love for You.**
- P** Lord Jesus Christ, be present with all those who are single. Encourage them with the love of friends and family. Provide caring people to remind them that they are not alone. Jesus, may our hearts be burning
- C** **with more fervent love for You.**
- P** Lord Jesus Christ, You have prepared many good works for us to do in our earthly lives. Give us courage to do those good works with joy, expecting nothing in return, knowing we are saved by grace alone. Jesus, may our hearts be burning
- C** **with more fervent love for You.**
- P** Lord, look with favor upon all who are sick, injured, and recovering.... Have mercy upon them and restore them to health according to Your wisdom. Jesus, may our hearts be burning
- C** **with more fervent love for You.**
- P** Lord Jesus, we commend all of these people and situations into Your hands, for You have promised in love to hear our prayers; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

## Offering

### Lord's Prayer

- C** Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name,  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven;  
give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom  
and the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.

## Prayer

- P** Let us pray. Almighty God, grant to Your Church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom that comes down from above, that Your Word may not be bound but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, so that in steadfast faith we may serve You and, in the confession of Your name, abide unto the end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

## Benediction

**P** The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look upon you with favor and † give you peace.

**C** **Amen.**

## Acknowledgments

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