

## Homily for 4th Sunday of Lent:

One guide through the Mass readings called Daily Prayer mentioned the following as part of its reflection for the Gospel this weekend. “This passage makes it seem as though there are only two types of people in the world: those who live in the light, and those who prefer the darkness. We have only to look at our own lives to know that most people stand somewhere in between.”

By that it did not mean that everyone is at various shades of twilight and shadow. It meant that our experience is one of going back and forth between doing good or sinning. It went on to say that every time we turn back to Christ, He is there to pour out upon us His life-given forgiveness.

That is a good place to begin looking at this passage from the Gospel According to John. God is constant and always faithful. We find ourselves following the Lord one minute, turning away the next, and then coming back again.

Our lives are nuanced and layered, they are multi-faceted and complicated. But ultimately, there are only two destinations, two choices. And Christ speaks today about these as darkness and light. Ultimately, do we prefer light, or hate light?

We are encouraged by these words to seek the light, to seek Christ. Our vocation is to head toward He who is the Light; to turn toward Him. Our calling is to turn back toward Him, to return to Him.

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Today Our Lord makes a connection between: the choice of loving either darkness or light; and the choices of how one lives. Christ speaks of those who either hate the light because their works are evil, or who live in the Truth and want their works clearly seen in the light. It is about both what we believe and how we live. It is about both Faith and Works. They come together in the choice to walk in the light of Christ. Or not.

The person of Jesus is the presence of the Kingdom. He is the Gospel, the Good News. He is here to give us Eternal Life. He is Eternal Life.

Therefore the choice for or against Jesus is the ONE REAL CHOICE we make. As in so many other passages in the gospels, Jesus is unique. He is not only a

man through whom God is working. He is the encounter with God Almighty. And so He is the choice between doing good or doing evil. Moving toward or away from Him is the choice to expose ourselves to His light and have our lives be seen in the radiant clarity of God.

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Our gospel today gives us cause for rejoicing. This choice we make is offered in one of the most inviting sentences we know. Today we hear what may be the most well-known verse of the bible. John 3:16. It is a summation of the gospel. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.”

The Incarnation, Passion, Death and Resurrection are all rolled up into this one sentence. In Jesus a choice is to be made. It is an inviting, attractive choice. But it is still a choice. A choice about Jesus is a choice about goodness, light, and a life that can only be called Eternal.

One commentary suggests that in the other gospels, it would be easy to understand Eternal Life as mainly dealing with a future judgement at the end times. But in John, the emphasis is that Eternal Life is lived now. The end times are realized in the present. We can live the abundant life today in the person of Jesus. Today we can remember that in Christ we have a new relationship with God, ourselves, each other, and all of creation NOW! Christ IS Eternal Life.

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During this season of Lent we take time to do two things.

First, we concentrate on turning more to the Light of Christ, and of loving the light.

Second, we walk with all of those who are journeying to Christ. All of those preparing to be born of water and spirit in Baptism are eager for the life Jesus promises. They are eager to share in the life we have been given. May we continue to walk in the light, and so encourage them, as well as each other, to live in the truth, and be enlighten by Christ.

**“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in him might not perish  
but might have eternal life.”**