

## Looking at the World through the Eyes of God - John 3:14-21

Our readings today remind us that Jesus came into the world, suffered, and died for each one of us. It is a profound truth that we often forget through the busyness of life. Jesus came for you and me. Our first reading from the second book of Chronicles reminds us of how far we oftentimes turn away from God and yet how incredibly compassionate He is with us. Despite how the people of Judah polluted the Lord's Temple, God sent messengers and prophets to try to reach them so they might turn back. And even with that, the people mocked the messengers. So the Lord allowed the temple to be destroyed. Yet all hope was not lost. With the rise of the king of Persia, the Temple was to be rebuilt.

Sometimes we are like the people of Judah. We might turn away from God in a moment of sin. He might have even given us an opportunity to choose otherwise, yet we still chose wrong. Or maybe we have had many, many years of turning away from God. He has likely sent countless people, signs, and opportunities which invited us back into a life with Christ and we just said no. We find ourselves stuck with our backs turned from the Lord. Despite all of that, God came into the world for you because He loves you and wants you to be with Him for eternity.

Our second reading and Gospel remind us of just that, as St. Paul said, "God is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions" and again as Jesus said, "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." In knowing all of our sins and imperfections, Jesus still came for us. He never once thought, 'he has too many problems, I can't help him' or 'she hasn't lived faithfully to my commands, she is a lost cause.' He knew all things and still died for us, and now patiently waits for us to run into His merciful arms.

We must realize that it was not out of good works on our part that He did this for us, but out of pure love. When we recognize that His love does not waver in any circumstance, we become overwhelmed with gratitude. How can we respond to this? By loving Him in return—in our thoughts; in how we spend our time; in how we treat others most especially our families; in how we spend our resources. Everything we do should be a reflection of our love for God. Then we will become a light of Christ in the world. During, these last weeks of Lent, let us examine our hearts for the times we have turned away from God, whether it be just a moment or years of distance from our Lord. Then let us bring all of those impurities to God, with a sorrowful heart and a resolution to change, in the sacrament of Confession. May we reflect on just how much God loves us despite our shortcomings and may we strive to love Him in return each day.

As we start a new Chapter of worshiping as ONE Church formed by the People of St. John, St Ann and St. James, I request that each one of us to reflect on the Great Commission to the Disciples: Mt. 28:19-20 "*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.*" Jesus gave his nascent church four tasks: Go, make, baptize and teach. Let us identify the hinge of this great commission to unify this Church!