



Small Group Newsletter
St. Mary of the Visitation Parish
Cambridge, (H) ONT.



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

March 11, 2018

Introduction to the Word:

We get offended, put off and angry by so many things - traffic, being late, relationships, not meeting our goals. So often its over little things and sometimes over everything! Of course this slows us down and wears us out.

Often all we need to do is "get over it", but the how can be a stumbling block. In our new series for the season of Lent we will ask ourselves what are the stumbling blocks to getting over stuff.

Warm-up Activity: (5-10 minutes)

Nicodemus came to Jesus in the dark of night to ask Him a question. He struggled with His faith, but He also desired to grow in it. What is it that your struggle with in your faith? How would you like to grow in it ?

Let us pray together our Heart to Home Prayer:

*God Our Heavenly Father, we long to make our thoughts your thoughts,
and our ways your ways. As we prepare with attentive mind and open heart
to hear your Word Lord, we long to be empowered with your Spirit
so that we may bring your Word to our families, our parish and our communities.
This, our prayer, we make through the intercession of Our Lady of the Visitation and in name of
Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

GOSPEL (John 3:14-21)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said to Nicodemus: "Just 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, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

"And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

[Consider hearing again the Sunday Message as a Small Group](#)



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Reflection:

In this Sunday's Gospel, we get to hear the most famous verse in all of the Bible: John 3:16. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life."* In this chapter, John recounts a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin who had sympathy for Jesus and his message of salvation through repentance. Nicodemus came out to meet Jesus after reports of the miracles Jesus had performed, hoping to gain some insight into His teachings.

The history of salvation, from the fall of Adam and Eve until the final judgment, revolves around the coming of Jesus Christ, the Savior, the Son of God. Why did He come? Because the Father sent Him. Why did the Father send Him? Because He "loved the world so much." He simply couldn't bear to see us perish in our sins; He longed to share with us His everlasting life. God cares. And Jesus Christ is the definitive proof that He cares. He cares so much that He is willing to sacrifice His only Son to atone for the sins that have separated man from God, the source of all good things. We need look no further to find the very core of the gospel: "God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not be lost but may have eternal life." No hidden agenda, no selfish undertones – pure generosity. This is the heart of God, of the Lord who longs for our friendship. You might be saying...alright, I know and understand and accept that...however...where is the insight?

So here is the insight? The cross. You see all of this was possible due to the generosity of the Father, but also because of the choice of the Son to accept the Cross. This instrument became not a tool of torture, but a pulpit of love. When we take on the Crosses of our life, in that same spirit, and accept His love, then we too are able to embrace Him and His love in our life. Are you willing to accept the Cross? What are you waiting for?

Questions for Discussion: (15-20 minutes)

- God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Has this truth penetrated in the depth of your heart, of your conscience? What crosses are you being asked to accept and embrace?
- Many people act as though they *do not believe* that God really loves them. Is this your experience? Why is it so difficult for us to believe this? What can you personally do to change this perception?

Moving Forward in Prayer (15-20 minutes)

This time is reserved for quiet prayer as well as for an action-response to the communal reflections. You may wish to create and add petitions of prayer at this time. It is also intended to provide moments to "outreach" to the community.

- Offer a Holy Hour in Adoration for the intentions of our Parish and its Pastor.
- How is your group preparing for Holy Week? How can your group prepare for the [Day of Mercy on March 22?](#)
- [Click here](#) and find out some ways your small group can have a blessed Season of Lent. Could helping our sister parish in Hamilton or our missions in Haiti or Kenya be possible?

Leader: **Let us seek the intercession of the Patroness of our Parish as we pray: [Hail Mary](#)**