

Fourth Sunday of the Lent- *Lætare* (Rejoice) Sunday – Mother’s Day

Sunday Readings: First Reading: 2 Chr 36:14-16, 19-23, Responsorial Psalm: Ps 137: 1-6, Second Reading Eph 2: 4-10, Gospel: Jn 3:14-21

Homily- Fr. Antony Chundelikkat

John 3:16 is probably the best loved verse in the Bible and it has been called "everybody's text" and the "Gospel of the Gospels." The central theme of today's readings is that God expressed His love, mercy and compassion for us by giving His only Son for our salvation. What does it mean to say God loves us? "God loved the world so much that He gave." That is one big difference between God and us: God gives and forgives; we get and forget. Giving is a sign of Agape. This is the kind of love God has for us. This is the kind of love we should have for one another. All of us, every single one of us, learned love at its beginning by dwelling for nine months listening to the beautiful sound of a heartbeat, the beating heart of our own mother. If a mom brings all of her babies to the doctor and they all put the stethoscope on, they hear the baby's heart and they can hear the mom's heart. She conceives that child in love. She bears the child in love. She raises the child in love.

Today as we meditate upon this mystery of love, we consider the most beautiful woman in our lives, our own mother, the one who gave us life, the one who taught us to love. Our mothers, out of love for us, wanted to give us not only natural life but they wanted to share with us eternal life. They have taught us to love so that we would be saints. They have brought us to the baptismal font so that we can get to Heaven. They teach us by word and by example what it means to follow the commandment of love. As they have done in this world, and as Our Lord has already done for us (as He promises in John's Gospel), I think that we can say the same for our mothers and our grandmothers who have gone before us: They go before us to prepare a place for us so that where they are, we also may be. Thanks be to God for moms. They are the ones who teach us the love of God in human form.

As every child knows, the safest place to be is in the arms of its mother, the place where it is going to be able to be completely relaxed. So too do we recognize the same thing in our Blessed Mother. And so, on this day, we give special thanks to each and every mother, to our own mothers on the natural order who brought us into this world and who taught us the most important lessons of love and life. We are grateful to our Mother, the Church, where we were born at the baptismal font. We are grateful to all of those astounding women who exercise their spiritual maternity in union with Our Lady in prayer, in sacrifice and suffering, to bring many more children to Christ. And we are grateful to our heavenly Mother who leads us to Jesus, who teaches us about Our Lord, who protects us, who guides us, who nourishes us, who prays for us, the one who will bring us to eternal life and teaches to us the only Name given to us by which we are to be saved, the Name of her Son, Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God for moms, and thanks to every mom who has co-operated with God in the work of creation and created the most incredible thing: a human person with a soul which is eternal to give glory to God.