



John 3:14-21

14 Jesus said to Nicodemus: 'The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, **15** so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. **16** Yes, 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. **17** For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved. **18** No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God's only Son. **19** On these grounds is sentence pronounced: that though the light has come into the world men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. **20** And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, for fear his actions should be exposed; **21** but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God.'

Other readings: 2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23 Psalm 136 (137) Ephesians 2:4-10

In Lent we frequently turn to the Gospel of John, for it contains a rich commentary on the events of the life of Jesus. In the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus in chapter 3 of the gospel Jesus explains privately to a Jew the significance of the coming of the Son of God. Nicodemus was described at the beginning of this chapter as a teacher. This teacher is willing to be taught by Jesus. The evangelist will not tell us whether Nicodemus accepts the teaching or not. After some early exchanges, we then hear no more words of Nicodemus, but only the teaching of Jesus.

The raising up of the Son of God speaks both of his death on the cross and of his resurrection. His death is considered glorious. It leads inevitably to resurrection and triumph. The coming of the Son and his self-giving in death and resurrection are the clearest proof of the love of God for the world. People are called to respond in faith. As St Paul teaches, it is by God's grace that we are saved, through faith. God saves us if only we will allow it. To refuse Christ knowingly is to refuse salvation.

The symbol of light is common in John's gospel. From the very start of the gospel we learnt that the Light came into the world to challenge the darkness, and that the darkness could not overpower the Light. The theme of light returns here. Nicodemus comes to Jesus during the night. Like him we are free to embrace the light or to prefer darkness. Reference to 'the truth' is also frequent in John's gospel. We will live by the truth, if we allow Jesus to lead us ever deeper into that truth.

Where do you need the light to shine in your life?

What does 'living by the truth' mean?

Let us pray for those who are discovering the truth of Christ.

Let us pray for those who struggle to see and accept the light.