



# Christ in Our Neighborhood

Prayer

Commentary

Father of peace, we are joyful in Your Word, Your Son Jesus Christ, who reconciles us to You. Let us hasten toward Easter with the eagerness of faith and love. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

## 2nd Reading: Ephesians 2:4-10

Commentary

## 1st Reading: 2 Chronicles 36:14-23

When a couple marries, they give their lives to each other with the words, "I will love you and honor you all the days of my life." When love and honor are lost, the marriage covenant falls apart. Separation, counseling, or even divorce are the result of a marriage gone bad.

When God created a covenant with Noah, Abraham, and Moses, it was a marriage where honor and love were expected.

The Second Book of Chronicles tells us that the covenant has suffered greatly due to infidelity of the princes, priests, and people. Their acts of dishonor desecrated their covenant with the Lord. In response, God would not divorce His people. Instead, He would separate Himself from them as He allowed the destruction of the temple and their exile to Babylon for 70 years.

As the psalmist sings, the beloved of God sat and wept at the streams of Babylon when they remembered Zion. The separation was a period for God's people to reflect on their covenant with the Lord.

Question

Have you ever had a moment when separation was necessary to restore a friendship with another?

## 4th Sunday of Lent

St. Paul tells the Ephesians that, through Christ Jesus, the covenant has been restored and brought to completion.

"Because of the great love he had for us," God brought us back to life - to full covenantal love.

Paul is quick to remind the Ephesians that it had nothing to do with the efforts or works of His people. Instead, it was through Jesus that we were redeemed and the covenant was restored.

Not by our efforts, but by God Himself in Jesus, did we receive this redemption. The only effort or work that must be done (if it is even work at all) is faith. Placing our faith in Christ who has fulfilled humanity's part of the covenant is all that God requires.

We can believe in Jesus Christ because he is himself God, the Word made flesh: "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 151)

Only a heart of faith in Jesus, who signed the covenant with his blood, is required to restore our marriage with God.

Question

Can you describe a time when you felt that your relationship with God was restored?

This Weekend

The RCIA Readings follow the A Year Cycle.  
A-Cycle commentaries are available at:  
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## Commentary

### Gospel: John 3:14-21

After the fall of Adam, God set in motion a plan of salvation and redemption. In every covenant along the way, God revealed His saving work. Gradually, but steadily, God was unfolding for us the final sealing of His covenant.

In our Gospel reading, we are reminded that “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.”

Salvation comes to those who believe in the one who was sent by God: Jesus Christ. When we place our faith in the light that came into the world, our eyes are opened and we realize that the Lord was always working to save us.

The “Exultet” at the Easter Vigil is a song that reminds us about the tremendous loving plan of God to restore us from the moment we first sinned:

“Oh happy fault!  
O necessary sin of Adam,  
which gave to us so great a Redeemer!”

If Adam had not sinned, God would have had no reason to save us. Instead of thinking of each of the covenants with Noah, Abraham, and Moses as separate moments, think of them as part of the whole thread of salvation, starting with Adam and ending with the Christ.

## Question

As you look at your ups and downs in your relationship with God, do you see your covenant with the Lord being made complete?

## *This Week's Task*

Try to restore a broken relationship that you may have with another. Even if prayer is the only thing you can do for the relationship, take the step. If you are able to take a bigger step, do it.

## Prayer

The leader invites each member to pass around a crucifix. Members are invited to venerate the cross with a kiss or some other gesture.

Holding the cross, he/she will say:

“God So Loved the World  
that he gave his only Son.”

The group will respond each time:

“Everyone who believes in him  
may have eternal life.”

The leader will then guide the group in praying Psalm 137.

## *Psalm*

**Response: Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!**

By the streams of Babylon,  
we sat and wept,  
when we remembered Zion.  
On the aspens of that land,  
we hung up our harps.

**Response: Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!**

For there our captors asked of us  
the lyrics of our songs,  
and our despoilers urged us to be joyous:  
“Sing for us the songs of Zion!”

**Response: Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!**

How could we sing a song of the Lord  
in a foreign land?  
If I forget you, Jerusalem,  
may my right hand be forgotten!

**Response: Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!**

May my tongue cleave to my palate  
if I remember you not,  
if I place not Jerusalem  
ahead of my joy

**Response: Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!**

**Conclude with an OUR FATHER**