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## 4th Sunday of Lent - 27 March 2022

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# 27 March 2022

## Fourth Sunday of Lent

Reflection by Gerard Moore

### **Pastoral Note: Fourth Sunday of Lent – Second Scrutiny**

by Vincent Glynn

The second Scrutiny is celebrated after the homily during which the celebrant is encouraged to explain the meaning of the scrutiny in the light of the Lenten liturgy and to encourage the elect that through the prayer of exorcism ‘their spirit is filled with Christ the Redeemer, who is light of the world’. This is found in the gospel of the man born blind which can be proclaimed on this Sunday (RCIA 130).

**Pastoral Note:** In parish communities where the elect for the RCIA are taking part in the Lenten scrutinies it is appropriate to read the gospel from Year A.

### **Introduction**

As we worship at the midpoint of Lent, we hear a story to which the needy, sinful and outcast are attracted, while the religious leaders are repelled. What will be our response? Ultimately the audience who turn away cause Jesus’ death: the leaders of faith are central to Jesus’ trial and condemnation. Ironically, the story of the brother who was ‘dead’ and came to ‘life’ will soon be celebrated afresh! Again, we are invited into the immensity of the reconciliation of God, this time through the parable of the forgiving father.

### **Penitential Act**

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you came to show us the compassion of the Father.  
Lord, have mercy.

You teach us the delights of God’s love.  
Christ, have mercy.

You show us the joy of forgiveness.  
Lord, have mercy.

## **Collect**

### *The oration*

O God, who through your Word  
reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way,  
grant, we pray,  
that with prompt devotion and eager faith  
the Christian people may hasten  
toward the solemn celebrations to come.

### *Commentary*

With the penitential season past the halfway mark, our Mass and collect reflect a lightened mood. The rubrics indicate that rose vestments may be used, instrumental music is permitted, and the altar decorated with flowers. In harmony with this, the opening prayer is replete with wonder, haste and eagerness. Already in view are the great celebrations of the Paschal Mystery, the solemn celebrations for which we are prepared by Lent. The invocation of God names in wonderment the central tenet of Christian belief: that through the Word all humanity is reconciled to God. The petition seeks the grace that we will respond. Corresponding to God's reconciling initiative, we ask that the Christian people may 'hasten' towards the celebration of humanity's redemption. The sense of forward and speedy movement mirrors the constant liturgical vocabulary of 'running' towards what God has offered. It also has a sense of Peter's excited venturing to the empty tomb. But it is not careless haste. Rather we are seeking a heart that is keen for the Easter feast, and a faith that is lively to its promise. In part this eager commitment is not simply because the faithful are saved, but because together with everyone across the pages of history, all humanity has been reconciled to God. This is the wonder of the divine reconciliation. The prayer was especially created for the Missal of Paul VI to bring this sense to contemporary believers in that it is pieced together from two ancient sources: a petition from the writings of Pope Leo the Great grafted onto an invocation from an ancient Roman Lenten prayer.

## **First Reading**

### **Joshua 5:9a, 10-12**

The entry of the people to the promised land is a constant reminder of the care of God and the freedom they have been given.

## **Responsorial Psalm**

### **Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7**

*Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.*

This psalm is used often in Sunday liturgies. We come to receive the body and blood of Christ and to receive the Word of God in order to be nourished. This idea is well expressed in Psalm 34 as it is a psalm that praises God for bestowing such

goodness on the righteous. This is the Lord who is near to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

## **Second Reading**

**2 Cor 5:17-21**

We are ambassadors for Christ, who has given us a ministry for reconciliation.

## **Gospel Reading**

**Lk 15:1-3, 11-32**

The unbounded forgiveness of God is proclaimed to tax collectors and sinners who draw near to God while the religious leaders turn away.

## **Reflection**

The opening sentence of the reading from the Hebrew bible places the wandering people of Israel in the promised land. The reproach of Egypt has been removed through their journey from slavery, across Red Sea waters and thirsty desert expanses, to a land of milk and honey. God has shown the promised fidelity, accompanied the people on the journey and laid before them a new land as their own. This celebration of the Passover was to be their last dependent of God's direct providence: from now on their given land would feed them. There was no longer need for manna.

Entering the fourth week of Lent, the readings are pointing towards the Triduum. The Passover reference takes us to the Last Supper, and the completion of the journey has a sense of being well on the way in our Lenten pilgrimage. The attainment of the land and its abundance speaks of the resurrection and the fulfillment of all things in Christ.

The lection has other features which speak into some themes of an ecological lent. The land is abundant: God has placed us within an astounding creation that feeds and sustains, and we are obliged to maintain this bounty, not destroy it. As well, beneath the surface of this reading, and of the Book of Joshua, is another 'text', another narrative. The mention of Jericho is a reminder that this new land belongs to other people. The wandering Israelites can be described as either refugees or invaders. There will be war over land, and at stake is survival and prosperity. There are also strands of peaceful coexistence: the arrival of Israel and their settling into the land has many layers. For our meditation, the ecological crisis is causing dispute over lands and their management. The management of fire in Australia is one instance. The melting of the Arctic ice is arousing territorial disputes amongst nations with polar regions. There are more difficult tensions in continents where rivers are shared between nations. Our Lenten reflections should include some time spent on whether we are maintaining a lifestyle that allows for land to remain fertile, and its riches shared rather than disputed.

Our Pauline reading carries the profound message of our reconciliation in God. It brings us well prepared to the proclamation of today's Gospel, and for the events and meaning of Good Friday.

From the actions of God, a new creation emerges, one at home in Christ and freed from sin. For Paul it is not enough to enjoy this peace and freedom. We are also called to be ministers of reconciliation, ambassadors of Christ. What Christ has done, we too take up, proclaim, and bring about. We have a ministry of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is a theme of particular importance in Australia. So many families migrated to this country, or found their way here by more hazardous routes, to escape violence and turmoil. The nation became a place where reconciliation could be hoped for and often achieved. Yet this welcoming and reconciling needs to be supplemented by a more careful reconciliation with the land, its fauna and flora, its rivers and oceans, its micro-climates and diverse natural forms. And any reconciliation cannot be taken seriously unless there is reconciliation and justice for the first peoples. As Catholics we cannot be ambassadors for reconciliation without addressing the violent history, current racism and prejudice and systemic injustice that we allow to be the status quo for indigenous Australians.

In the words of Pope Francis

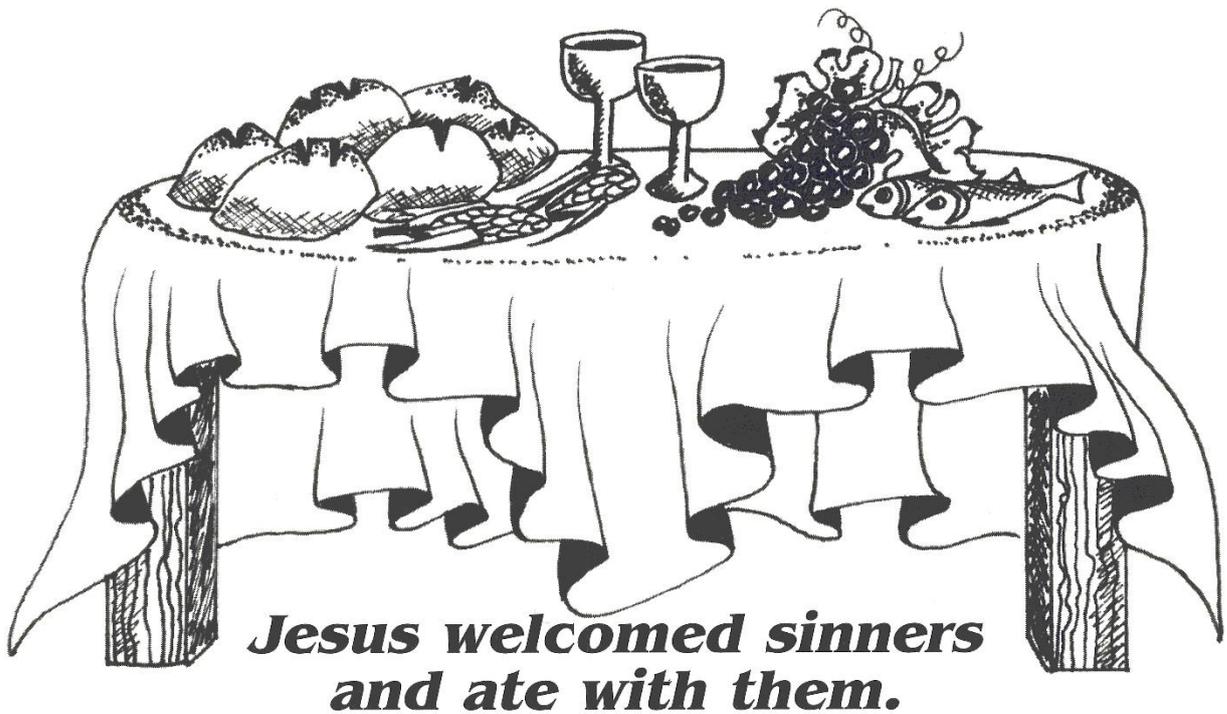
I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all. The worldwide ecological movement has already made considerable progress and led to the establishment of numerous organizations committed to raising awareness of these challenges. ... We require a new and universal solidarity. As the bishops of Southern Africa have stated: "Everyone's talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God's creation". All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents. (*Laudato Si!* 14)

The Gospel story is so well known that it does not bear retelling here, however there are some features that inform our Lenten fare.

The opening sentence sets the context. As Jesus preaches, the needy and sinful and outcast are drawn near, while the religious leaders turn away. This will cause Jesus' death: the leaders of faith are central to Jesus' trial and condemnation. Ironically, the story of the brother who was 'dead' and came to 'life' will soon be celebrated afresh! The parable is misnamed. The focus of the narrative falls to the forgiving father, while too often our focus is on the son and his journey of repentance. The son expects little, while the father's response is deep from the heart of a saddened parent: nothing is to be spared to welcome back the one who was lost to the family yet was always loved and always missed. The older brother has misunderstood the meaning of the celebration. The father's love for the prodigal does not endanger his status or place in the household or reputation as steadfast.

Divine love is not a calculation, but rather a reservoir without limit. There is ample room in the heart of the father for both of his sons to be loved.

The younger son committed heinous crimes: he debased his father, split the family inheritance, destabilized the family, squandered the future. This takes us back to the setting of the Gospel passage: the sinners are drawn to God; the leaders turn away. We are to be ambassadors of this divine reconciliation.



# Prayer of the Faithful

## Introduction

God is revealed to us as the Bread of Life, and so we turn now during this season of Lent with our petitions and the knowledge that our needs will be answered.

## Petitions

We pray for the leaders of the Church, especially Pope Francis and the bishops, that through the Spirit they may possess the wisdom and grace to lead the Church and its people into the Synod in 2023 with willingness to do God's will.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of our world that they will work together wherever possible to alleviate the pressure from climate change on our created world.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the members of the Plenary Council as they work in preparation for the second Assembly in July. May their efforts truly reflect the needs of the People of God and help us grow as a Church.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who feel shame or exclusion due to their frailty. May God's loving kindness and forgiveness be brought to them through the Holy Spirit so they feel accepted, loved and valued by those around them and those who care for them.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who do not recognise Christ as the Messiah, that in this coming season his goodness and divinity will be revealed to them so that they may know that they are saved.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who need refuge and those who are unable to get home because of the pandemic. May God who brought the Israelites from Egypt, carry them safely to the place they have been promised.

*(Pause)* Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

## Conclusion

Father, all these petitions have been brought to you by your faithful children. Grant them through the power of the Spirit and in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

## Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

### GA

Amazing grace. J Newton. 437  
A new heart for a new world. T Watts/ M O'Brien. 438  
Bless the Lord my soul. M. Haugen. 84  
God of mercy and compassion. M. Hodgetts/ P Jones. 302  
I heard the voice of Jesus say. H Bonar/ R V Williams. 468  
Love divine, all loves excelling. C Wesley/ R Prichard. 463  
Love is his word. L Connaughton/ A Milner. 462  
Praise to the holiest in the height. J H Newman/ S Webbe. 410  
Return to God. M Haugen. 304  
Taste and see God's love. D. Browne/ J Wood. 203  
Tree of life. M Haugen. 307  
Yes, I shall arise. L. Deiss. 214

### AOV1

Amazing grace. J Newton. 29  
A new heart for a new world. T Watts/ M O'Brien. 158  
Be reconciled as one. C Willcock SJ. 162  
Gather us together. O. Alstott. 111  
I heard the voice of Jesus say. H Bonar/ R V Williams. 54  
Strong and constant. Frank Andersen MSC. 110

### AOV2

Table of plenty. D. Schutte. 20

### AOV4Kids

Rejoice in the Lord. Traditional melody. 75

### CWB

Bring us back to you, O Lord our God. Jean-Paul Lécot and Sr Lucia Fay. 629  
God of mercy and compassion. Michael Hodgetts. 692  
O Father, I know I can count on your mercy. Kathleen Boschetti MSC. 762  
Our Father, we have wandered. Kevin Nichols. 784  
Strong and constant. Frank Andersen MSC. 812  
There's a wideness in God's mercy. Frederick William Faber. 838  
Yes, I shall arise. Lucien Deiss. 867

### CWBII

*Sunday by Sunday hymn suggestions*

Bring us back to you, O Lord our God. Jean-Paul Lécot and Sr Lucia Fay. 287  
God of mercy and compassion. Edmund Vaughan C SSR/Paul Bird C SSR. 290  
Our Father, we have wandered. Kevin Nichols. 297  
A new heart for a new world. Trisha Watts and Monica O'Brien. 477  
There's a wideness in God's mercy. Frederick William Faber. 624  
Yes, I shall arise. Lucien Deiss, CSSp. 648  
*Additional selection by Chris deSilva*  
Return to God. Marty Haugen. 298

## **S&S2**

Taste and see. Steve Angrisano. 254

## **Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy**

Psalm 33: *Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.*

Psalm 33: Richard Proulx. CWB 332 (stanzas 1-3)

Psalm 33: Christopher Willcock SJ. CWB 595 (stanzas 1-3)

Psalm 34: Taste and see: Christopher Willcock. GA 33 (verses 1-3)

Psalm 34: Taste and see: Stephen Dean. GA 34 (verses 1-3)

Psalm 34: Taste and see: Jane Wood. GA 35 (verses 1-3)

Psalm 34 (33): Jenny O'Brien. JOBC pg. 32

Taste and see: Paul Mason. PM pg. 32 (verses 1, 2, 3)

Taste and see the goodness of the Lord. Marty Haugen. LPC pg. 44

## **Music selections by Michael Mangan**

Create a new heart (FWS) *Based on Ps 50/51* [Gathering, Gifts, Recessional]

Be with us (FWS) *Based on Ps 90/91* [Gathering, Gifts]

This is the time (TT) [Gathering, Recessional]

Taste and see *Based on Ps 33/34* [Gifts, Communion]

Lenten acclamation (TT) [Gospel Acclamation]

Lenten gospel acclamation – Mass Jubilee (MJC) [Gospel Acclamation]

Turn back to God (TT/SYJ) [CHILDREN: Gathering, Recessional]

