

11 MARCH 2018

# Sunday Message

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

THE WORD

Year B • Season colour: Purple or Rose • Psalter Week 4

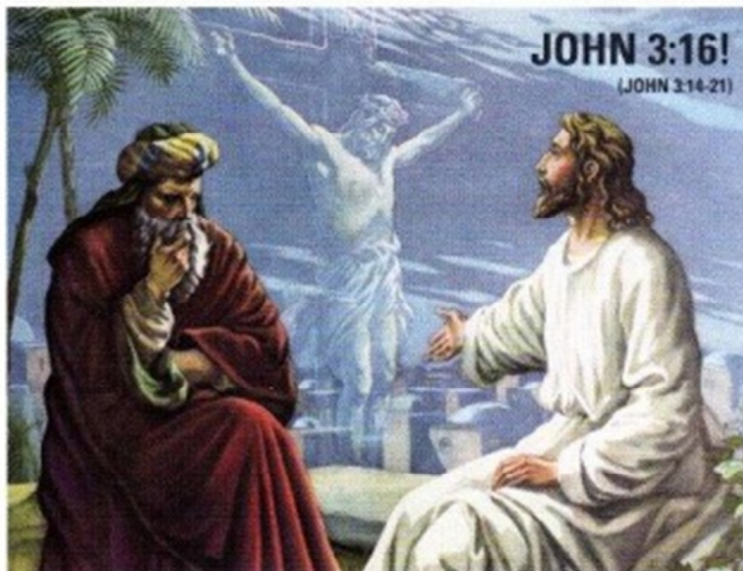


Image of Jesus teaching Nicodemus, from Grace Church Chiangmai, Thailand

**JOHN 3:16!**

(JOHN 3:14-21)

Nicodemus is a high-ranking leader within the Jewish community, a member of the Sanhedrin and a teacher in Israel. He comes to Jesus under cover of darkness, which indicates his state of mind regarding Jesus and his message.

His difficulty is that he realises that there is something important about Jesus, but he is unable to move beyond his own learning and imagine that God's love and self-revealing could be different – and greater – than his current understanding. He represents the person who wants to believe but who can't, at least at the moment. He is not refusing to believe, and later in the Gospel will find the courage to speak up in the Sanhedrin against the judging of Jesus without due process and finally to assist in the burial of Jesus' crucified body.

We might say that Nicodemus is unable to think outside the box. If he wants to move forward in his understanding of Jesus and what God is offering through Jesus, then he needs to make a decision and to take a leap of faith. At the moment, he is unable to see that the Spirit cannot be contained within the borders of the official teaching and tradition with which he is familiar. His thinking is confined to the things of earth; his faith in Jesus is partial. Once he allows himself to accept the gift of the Spirit from above, then he can be born again.

Today's section of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus begins with the reference to Moses lifting up the bronze serpent during the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness between Egypt and Canaan during the Exodus. Jesus will be physically lifted up on the cross: in John's thought, this is the moment of his exaltation: the Israelites who gazed on the serpent were healed of the poisonous bites they had received as punishment; in the same way the person who believes in the revelation of God shown through Jesus' being glorified on the cross will receive eternal life. ■

## DO

Write John 3:16! on a card or piece of paper. Carry this with you for the next week, and when you notice it, say to yourself the verse from the Gospel.



## REFLECT

Sometimes in the crowd at a sporting event you will see a placard held up which reads John 3:16! This refers to the verse in today's Gospel which reads "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." This is often called 'the Gospel in miniature': if most of the New Testament were lost and all we had left were these four short phrases, then we would have the essential Christian message.

God's motive for reaching out to human beings is love, not judgment. This love is universal, it is not restricted to any particular group or institution, which is why John says that God loved the world to the extent of sending his Son as a gift. A person either accepts or declines a gift, and Nicodemus represents someone who cannot make up his or her mind so takes the parcel and leaves it in the cupboard for the time being. All we are asked to do is to keep an open mind and to allow the Spirit to lead us into a deeper relationship with the Lord. ■

## LEARN

The bronze serpent is the means by which Moses, at the Lord's instruction, provides healing for the wounded Israelites during the Exodus journey.

In the Fourth Gospel, the crucifixion is not a painful, ignominious end to Jesus' life but the moment of his exaltation as the Son of God.

There is a play on words throughout John's version of the Gospel on Jesus' being lifted up and his being exalted in glory.

The judgment we receive depends not on our conduct, that is the sins we commit, but on the decision we make about who Jesus is and his place in our lives.

## SAY

God loved the world so much ...

**SWINFORD MEELICK MIDFIELD**  
**Fr Dermot Meehan Phone: 094-9251790/Urgent Calls: 087-1338200**

**PARISH OFFICE- OPENING HOURS: Mon, Thurs, Fri: 9.30am-2.30pm; Tues: 9.30am-1p.m;**  
**Phone: 094 - 9253607**  
**Email: swinews@hotmail.com** **11<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> Mar 2018**

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT**

<b>Saturday 10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6.30pm</b>	<b>Swinford:</b> Michael Waters & parents Mick & Annie & parents-in-law John & Kate Howley Finbar Ruane, Park Road & dec'd Ruane & Gallagher Families
<b>Sunday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>12 noon</b>	<b>Swinford:</b> Eddie Ruane, Kilkelly Road Joan Golderick, Liseratish/London (1st anniv)
<b>Monday 12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>Swinford:</b> Kathleen Muldowney, Rabawn Owen O'Malley, Rabawn
<b>Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>Swinford:</b> Thomas & Bridget Durkan & son Michael & daughter Mary & daughter-in-law Nora Pat & Mary Costello & grandson Kieran & dec'd Deacy & Costello Families
<b>Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>Swinford:</b> Stephen Slattery
<b>Thursday 15<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>Swinford:</b> No Intention
<b>Friday 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.00am</b>	<b>Swinford:</b> Dec'd Members of the Brabazon Trust

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY**

<b>Friday 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6.30pm</b>	<b>Swinford:</b> Michael & Freda Loftus & parents & dec'd Family, Ballydrum Delia Gallagher, Cullane
<b>Saturday 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>12.00 noon</b>	<b>Swinford:</b> Mary Durkan, Cloonacanna (1 <sup>st</sup> anniv) Matt Gallagher & dec'd Gallagher & Brady Families, Cullane <b>Please note: No 6.30p.m. Mass</b>

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT**

<b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>12 noon</b>	<b>Swinford:</b> Paddy Doyle & his daughter-in-law Veronica & Owen & Delia O'Brien, Tullinacurra & dec'd Family Bill & Eileen Ormsby, Park Road & dec'd Ormsby & Clarke Families
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<b>Sunday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9.00am</b>	<b>Meelick:</b> Margaret Gallagher, Oldcastle (M.M)
<b>Saturday 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9.00am</b>	<b>Meelick: St Patrick's Day</b>
<b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>9.00am</b>	<b>Meelick:</b> Sabina & Timothy Mulroy, laughtadurkin & dec'd Mulroy & Burke Families Mary & Vincent Roughneen

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<b>Sunday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Midfield:</b> Jimmy & Annie Devine, Tullinahoo
<b>Saturday 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Midfield: St Patrick's Day</b>
<b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10.30am</b>	<b>Midfield:</b> Ann & John Jennings & daughter Helen Dec'd of the Prendergast Family, Woods & The McLoughlin Family, Kinaffe & The McNicholas Family, Cashelsheenaughane & Ellie & Walter Bradish

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**Please pray for** Sr Dolores Gallagher of the Sisters of Mercy; Eamonn O'Brien (brother of Peter O'Brien, Ballydrum); Cait Nyland (nee Gallagher) Killorglin, Co.Kerry and formerly Carnacross/Sweetwell (sister-in-law of the late Martin Nyland, Sweetwell & Molly Higgins Main Street and cousin of Frances Ryan, Sweetwell). May they rest in the peace of Christ.

**St Patrick's Day:** Saturday next, March 17th, is the Solemnity of St Patrick, patron saint of Ireland and a holyday of obligation. The Vigil Mass for the feast of our national patron will be in Swinford Church on Friday evening, March 16th, at 6.30p.m. On March 17th Mass will be celebrated in Meelick Church at 9a.m., in Midfield Church at 10.30a.m. and in Swinford Church at 12 noon. **Please note that there will not be Vigil Mass at 6.30p.m. in Swinford Church on March 17th.**

**Parish Pastoral Council:** The March meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council will take place in the Meeting Room in the Parochial House on Monday, May 12th at 8.30p.m.

**The events of each day** are guided by a key theme from Pope Francis' document The Joy of Love (Amoris Laetitia), on love in the family, and will include topics on the joys and challenges of love, marriage and family life in today's world. Young people and children can also have a faith experience at our tailored programmes for children (4-12years) and young people (13-17years).

**World Meeting of Families:** We are delighted to announce that the outline of the three-day Pastoral Congress is now available on our website. The Congress will run from 22-24 August in the RDS, Dublin and is packed with major panels, workshops, testimonies, cultural events and music performances throughout each day. We also have breakfast lectures in the mornings for everyone but especially for members of the business community. The Congress will include the daily celebration of the Eucharist.

**Places for the Congress** are limited and include guaranteed tickets for the Festival of Families and Final Mass, subject to availability. Children under 18 years go free but must have a ticket.

**A Month's Mind Mass** for the late Mai O'Brien will now be held at the Church of Our Lady in

Barnacarrol, Claremorris on Saturday 24th March at 12 noon.

**Trip to Medjugorje:** Join us on Sept 27th 2018 flying from knock for 7 nights, half board, with Fr Gerry Davey as Spiritual Director. Contact Isabel on 086-2151338 for further details.

**Swinford F.C:** The Registration of U13, U15 and U17 Boys will be held in the Gateway Hotel on Tuesday 13th March from 7p.m to 8.30p.m.

**GAA 50/50:** This week's draw was held in the Whitehouse and Cian Campbell of Chapel Street won €405. Next draw is on 13th March.

**Léacht le haghaidh Seachtain na Gaeilge:** Beidh Peadar O' Muircheartaigh, as Coillte Mach ó thús, ag tabhairt léachta ar an ábhar: -Scéal Scéalai: Tomás O' Cathasaigh agus a chuid scéalta i dteach tabhairne Uí Mhéalóid (Melletts) i mBéal Átha na Muice ag 8pm ar an Déardaoin 15ú Márta. Beidh fáilte roimh chách.

**Meelick ICA Guild AGM** will be held on Wed 14th March at 8pm at Meelick Community Centre. Enquiries: Judith 086-0749103.

**Heartfulness, Relaxation and Meditation:** Mon March 12th at 7pm in the Parochial House Swinford, Contact 086-0700681 for more info.

**"Winning The Pro Life Argument"** John Waters and Dr Patricia Casey will be having a talk in the D'Alton Inn in Claremorris, on Tuesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 7.30p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend.

**Jack Feeney Commemorative Concert:** will be held on Fri 16<sup>th</sup> March in the Gateway Hotel. Tickets available on the door, O'Connell's Pharmacy, Melletts & the Gateway Hotel.

**Swinford Community Lotto:** Results March 5<sup>th</sup> Numbers: 23 26 28 29; €70 Local Shopping Voucher Winners; Aoife Mchugh, Dungarvan, Co Waterford; Bernedette Henry, c/o Melletts Newsagents; 3 Number Winners; Caroline Colter, Carrabeg, Swinford; Jackpot €3,800.

**Open Evening for Hair and Beauty Courses** at St Louis community school kiltimagh on Monday 12th March at 7p.m. All welcome to attend.

**Swinford A.C:** The Cooke Family, Cloonraver, Charlestown won €242 in last Tuesday night's lotto draw. Please continue to support.

**Self-Care to Wellness Morning programme:** starting in Charlestown Art Centre on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March for a six-week programme. Contact 087-7185615/094-9034980 for more info.