

God so loved the world

From The Faces of Jesus by Frederick Beuchner

“GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD,” John writes, “that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

That is to say that God so loved the world that he gave his only son even to this obscene horror; so loved the world that in some ultimately indescribable way and at some ultimately immeasurable cost he gave the world himself. Out of this terrible death, John says, came eternal life not just in the sense of resurrection to life after death but in the sense of life so precious even this side of death that to live it is to stand with one foot already in eternity.

To participate in the sacrificial life and death of Jesus Christ is to live already in his kingdom. This is the essence of the Christian message, the heart of the Good News, and it is why the cross has become the chief Christian symbol. A cross of all things—a guillotine, a gallows—but the cross at the same time as the crossroads of eternity and time, as the place where such a mighty heart was broken that the healing power of God himself could flow through it into a sick and broken world.

It was for this reason that of all the possible words they could have used to describe the day of his death, the word they settled on was “good.” Good Friday.

The Passion in Art - Three Lectures for Lent Thursdays in March 6pm for a glass of wine. Talks start at 6.15pm.

We welcome back Archdeacon Peter Delaney for three special lectures looking at how artists have represented the Passion of Christ.

Join us on Thursday 5th, Thursday 12th and Thursday 19th March.
All welcome!

St Stephen Walbrook

Lent Quiet Hour

Readings, Prayers & Poems

Please take a copy



Study for Nicodemus Visiting Jesus, Henry Ossawa Tanner, 1899

The season of Lent is set aside as a time of self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study and preparation for Easter. Take time out during your commute to and from work to spend a few moments in stillness and prayer during our Lent Quiet Hour on Wednesday evenings from 6-7pm (except March 18th) and Thursday mornings from 8am-9am. The images, readings, prayers and poems in this leaflet may be helpful. Please take a copy away with you.

Nicodemus

Mary Elizabeth Coleridge

With slow and stealthy steps he trod
— The darkening and deserted streets;
— And no one in the market greets
The man upon his way to God.

By night he left the splendid home
— That sheltered many a sleeping guest.
— One and another lay at rest —
The master of the house would roam.

Was there a single soul that knew?
— No! For he feared the eye of scorn,
— The crooked laugh of anger born.
Only the bats about him flew.

The brodered borders of his gown
— He covered o'er, that none might see.
— Shall good come out of Galilee?
This were the mock of all the town.

But in the City named for Peace
— No peace his weary heart had known,
— And ever in the crowd alone
He waged a war that would not cease.

He came by night — and yet he came.
— And He that was Himself the Way
— Shall own him in the Judgment Day,
And to the world confess his name.

John 3:1-17

Gospel Reading for the Second Sunday in Lent

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”