

4th Sunday of Lent
March 22, 2009

In today's gospel passage we are reminded that God sent His only Son into the world so that all might be saved through Him. It is not God's desire to punish us, or be alienated from us. We punish ourselves when we choose not to trust in God's love and concern for our well-being.

We choose not to trust when we opt for our own plans over God's plan of salvation for us. We settle for gratification of our own desires in place of seeking the eternal life Jesus promises. We are more concerned with what we want than what God wants for us.

Jesus came to show us the way...the way to eternal life with God, the way to live our lives to find meaning and happiness, the way to treat others on the journey. When we follow His example we live in light. There is no need to hide anything. There is no need to be evasive or distrustful of one another. Our lives invite others to share in the joy and the meaning we have found in trying to be disciples.

When our choices and actions are self-serving (instead of God-serving) we feel a need to hide them, to become secretive and wary. We project our own selfish motives and feelings upon others and become suspicious of them, and cynical and skeptical. In this frame of mind we covet power to protect ourselves from a threatening world. We amass material wealth to provide security, guarantees against future disasters. Competition replaces cooperation, and mastery over the material world replaces the delight God had intended for us to have in His creation. We become suspicious of God, questioning His love and providence because His plan for us is different than our own.

This Lent we seek to examine ourselves and our behaviors more closely. Can we live in the light? Can we make the leap that the teaching of Jesus, so foreign to the values of our culture, really is the way to fulfilled life, now and in eternity? Can we actually trust that God wants what is best for us, and that perhaps God knows what that is better than we do? Jesus challenges us to live in the light of God's love. To do so we must stop clinging to darkness of our own making.

God bless you.

Fr. Pat