

Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 11, 2018

Reading 1 [2 CHR 36:14-16, 19-23](#)

Responsorial Psalm [PS 137:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6.](#)

R. (6ab) **Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!**

Reading 2 [EPH 2:4-10](#)

Gospel [JN 3:14-21](#)

Jesus said to Nicodemus: “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who 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 might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

HOMILY:

Of course, we prefer the light to darkness. It’s the motive behind daylight savings time, when we move our clocks so that our activity time matches more closely to the available light that God has given us. But, it is not without its cost—which we experience this weekend. But . . . you think you’re annoyed about losing an hour of sleep this weekend? It can be safely said that the students on the Ohio University campus took annoyance to Daylight Savings Time to a whole new level twenty years ago. In 1997, things got out of hand near the Athens, Ohio campus when “watering holes” catering to Ohio University students closed early as a result of the time change. And by “out of hand,” is meant a full-fledged riot involving a thousand people that had to be dispersed by police in riot gear. In the end, some 47 people were arrested. The next year, it was more or less the same thing. [Police Chief Rick] Mayer pointed out that bars closing early was not a primary factor behind the . . . [riots]. He noted that the city had similar problems with [two other recent community festivals], and neither had anything to do with last call. “I don’t think you can say it’s just the time change,” he said. “It’s an attitude among certain individuals in the student population that brings this on.”

Oh, the irony! Daylight savings time, intended to move our living time more into the available daylight, for these college students was the occasion when by their actions they “preferred the darkness to the light.” Apparently how we set our clocks doesn’t guarantee the maximum of actual “living in the light,” at least when considering our actions.

It is a scientific fact that without light, there can be no life. *It is also a spiritual truth.* And since Jesus came that we might “have life and have it in abundance” (*cf.* John 10:10), He is mightily concerned about light. In today’s gospel from the 3rd chapter of the gospel of John, Jesus, who is “the light who has come into the world” (*cf.* John 1:9), declares His merciful sentence on the world when He says:

“And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.”

This sentence is merciful because, even when we choose darkness, the Lord continues to seek us and come to us as the light of life and mercy. The Light has come to give us life and the question for each of us is: where do we yet prefer the darkness? Is it the darkness of anger, resentment, unforgiveness, online darkness, fear, doubt, dependency on drugs and alcohol, racial hatred, selfishness, neglect of the poor, etc., etc. Where do you prefer the darkness? This is exactly where our Lord wants to meet you with the light of mercy. Let us bring Him the darkness and trust him to overcome and heal it, for this is why He came: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.” Where are you without life in abundance? Oh Lord, we have too long preferred the darkness to the light! Isn’t it time to follow Your way in light to life?

Darkness need not have the final word. For the Word of God, Jesus, the light of the world, is Light who wants to come into any experience of darkness in our lives. In Him, in His love and power, we can be literally driven from darkness to light—if we’ll allow ourselves to be so driven. His Spirit prompts at us, presses us, and drives us to settle for nothing less than light and life. Isn’t it time?

Daylight saving time offers no guarantee for living more fully in the light, and it’s not just the college students who show this. For we, too, often prefer darkness to the light. And we’ll need more than changing the clocks. We’ll need to change our direction, back toward the Light, Who waits to help us and save us. Behold, once again, Jesus Christ, the light of the World, is that light that comes into our world in the Eucharist we are about to share, to drive us from darkness to light, from death to life. Let’s let him drive.