

We reflect on the Gospel for 4th Sunday of Lent [John 3: 14 – 21]. We are told that Nicodemus was a “Pharisee”, “a leading Jew” – in other words he knows the Word of God and the traditions, beliefs and practices of the people of Israel. He is interested in and attracted to Jesus, and yet when he comes face to face with Jesus, he cannot bring himself to fully believe [at most he gets to a partial belief in Jesus]. Looking at Nicodemus from a distance we could say that he is the ideal candidate for discipleship, Jesus hardly meets a better qualified person in his ministry. So what is blocking Nicodemus?

We could sum it up like this: Nicodemus is used to a dim light, a partial recognition or understanding of God, a religion that is within the limits of his comprehension and control. Jesus wants nothing to do with this: there is no limited Jesus, no “Jesus for beginners” or “Jesus for slow learners”. Jesus presents Nicodemus with the fullness of discipleship. The more Nicodemus resists the more Jesus opens up to him. There are two words in particular that jump out of the page at us: **Love** and **Light**.

“God loved the world so much that He gave his only Son”

“The Light has come into the world”

Those two statements bring us face to face with the truth of who God is, with the very nature of God. In addition they bring us face to face with the truth of Jesus’ presence in our world and what it means. We are only ever at the beginning of the great depths of mystery these two statements contain.

For Reflection

“A light that shines in the darkness, a light that darkness could not overpower....The Word was the true light, that enlighten all people; and He was coming into the world”. [John: Prologue]

“While you still have the light, believe in the light and you will become sons of light”, [John 12:36]

“Anyone who fails to love can never have known God, because God is love. God’s love for us was revealed when God sent into the world his only Son”. [1 John 4:9]

“The important thing is not to think much but to love much; and so do that which best stirs you to love”. [St. Teresa of Avila]

“Not all are capable of meditating but all souls are capable to loving – therefore all are capable of perfect prayer”. [St. Teresa of Avila]

“She [the soul] states that He [God] will show her how to love Him as perfectly as she desires. It is precisely by giving her his love that he shows her how to love as she is loved by

him. Besides teaching her to love purely, freely, and disinterestedly, as He loves us, God makes her love Him with the very strength with which He loves her. As if He were to put an instrument in her hands and show her how it works by operating it jointly with her, he shows her how to love and gives her the ability to do so". [St. John of the Cross]