

# Parish Newsletter

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT | 11 MARCH 2018  
YEAR B | ISSUE 15

Spectators at sporting events sometimes see a reference to a verse from today's Gospel, that God sent His Son for the salvation and not the condemnation of the world. The sight of a placard proclaiming the Gospel prominently placed behind a goalpost is a reminder to reflect on both the need for, and the nature of salvation.

Sports commentators and writers often have recourse to the language of redemption in referring to the aims and achievements of players and teams. Sporting success is often seen and stated in terms of salvation. This can refer to the fact of winning after failure and is attributed entirely to the efforts of those engaged in the game or match.

**'Nothing of what a repentant sinner places before God's mercy can be excluded from the embrace of his forgiveness.'**

– Pope Francis  
(*Misericordia et Misera*)

However, the Gospel proclaims that salvation is not something gained through a game but is given. Saint Paul states this clearly: 'God loved us with so much love that he was generous with his mercy'. Matches are won on merit, salvation is given on mercy. Salvation is God's say in the human story, the final say which

## THIS WEEK (12–18 MARCH)

- 12 **Mon** St Maximilian
- 13 **Tue** St Euphrasia
- 14 **Wed** St Leobinus; St Matilde
- 15 **Thur** St Louise de Marillac
- 16 **Fri** St Finian
- 17 **Sat** ST PATRICK, PATRON OF IRELAND
- 18 **Sun** FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



## A MOST GENEROUS GIFT

leads to freedom from diminishment, death and self-destructiveness. Salvation is not a reward for success but a remedy for sin, the redemption that is revealed through the Resurrection.

The exuberance with which Paul proclaims salvation is not excessive because it brings an eternal remedy as the Prayer over the Offerings exclaims. The motive and means of salvation is God's mercy. Pope Francis has made this mercy of God the meaning of the Church's mission. The call to conversion is not a charge of condemnation, though things may need to change in the conduct and course of a person's or a community's life. Conversion is a change for the better so that we become good and live as God has always intended and invited us to be. Mercy is the grammar of grace by which God in Christ and through the Holy Spirit helps us to write the story of a good and happy

life that looks forward in hope to a place in heaven.

As Lent looks towards Easter we can leave the darkness of sin and live in the light of grace. God's infinite generosity invites us to look beyond the cynicism, competitiveness and conflict that can coarsen life, cheating people of joy and peace. ■

– Kevin O'Gorman SMA

### Reflection

How can I celebrate and communicate the Gospel story of salvation?

### Lesson

'The Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel'. (Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*, 114)

### Prayer

Lord, in Your mercy you offer the grace of healing and hope. Help me to appreciate and accept such an absolute gift.

### NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS



Jeremiah 31:31-34  
Psalm 50:3-4, 12-15  
Hebrews 5:7-9  
John 12:20-33