

## St. Louis Catholic Church

Saturday of the 4th Week of Lent

Jeremiah 11:18-20

John 7:40-53

Nicodemus, a Pharisee, is an open minded, curious and fair person. He is also a man of great courage and conviction. He clearly goes against the tide especially as it flows against the man from Galilee or Judea or Bethlehem. Nicodemus had met at night, in secret, with Jesus to speak and listen. It was a chance to let Jesus have His say. Nicodemus was moved. "It is possible" could have been the feeling after his encounter with Jesus in the 3rd Chapter of John. Now in today's Gospel, Nicodemus is being a just man who is calling for fairness in the treatment of Jesus. Like in our court system, Nicodemus would say Jesus is "alleged" to have done or said something, he would have called all to be unbiased jurors. There is no guilt nor should there be a presumption of guilt. Later Nicodemus would show courage in assisting in the burial of Jesus.

The facts against Jesus today refer to where He is from. The Messiah was to be from the Region of Judea. The city would be Bethlehem. The attackers--close minded--thought they knew everything. Jesus is from Nazareth in Galilee. Yet they were the guilty ones of Rash Judgment. Like yesterday they would rather attack the Just One than be confronted with the possibility that their way might be wrong. Nicodemus challenged the powerful. He risked his reputation by testifying to the truth. He called the leaders to the "possibility" of the person Christ as the Messiah. Others used their excuses as a means to remain in their own world.

Jeremiah too was a prophet with the courage and conviction to call the people to a change of heart and a new way of living. He realizes in his intimacy with God that he's a trusting lamb being led to slaughter. His mission is dangerous and there is a great risk in his yes to God. A prophet first hears the message and then proclaims it. His preaching now causes the plot to kill him. He was certainly a forerunner of Christ.

These days of spiritual awareness call us to be like not just Jesus, but also to develop the qualities of Nicodemus and Jeremiah. Being a Catholic by baptism is not the only requirement of discipleship. Why do I have the gift of faith? Why did God call me to life and give me life? Is it true that before I was formed in the womb that God knew me and that before I was born, God dedicated me? Do I really have within me the empowerment and life of the Holy Spirit? Am I really a Temple? God lives in me? Is my way of acting, believing a testimony to the love of God? Do I really believe that He is truly present body, blood, soul and divinity? If so why am I not at Mass at least every Sunday, perhaps a weekday or why do I not come and kneel before Him in Adoration? Is He really Lord of Lords, King of Kings in my life? If so why do I not love, worship and serve Him totally? Did Christ really found a Church and say to Simon, you are Peter and on this rock I build "My Church"? If so am I a vital loyal, faith filled member of the Body of Christ? Do I really believe Christ is the Word Made Flesh? If so do I hear the word and digest it and follow the example of that Word Made Flesh?

Could Christ have been right? Nicodemus always stands as one whose curiosity led him to discipleship. The teaching of the Church is tough. It calls us to be different in the world today. Yes it is a prophetic Body of Christ who teaches like Jeremiah and Jesus. It's easy to attack the Church, it is made up of humans and we can easily find the flaws and therefore like the Pharisees

use the excuses. I don't like this bishop or priest; I disagree with the way things are done is like saying "He is not from Bethlehem or Judea". When our practice and way of living is confronted we find a reason to ignore what just may be the Truth. Right to life issues, medical and moral ethical questions, doctrinal statements and disciplines often confront and even disturb our way. Easy? No!!! It has often been said that Catholicism is tough to live in because it stands for something. It has also been said often that it is easy to die in because of the mercy, compassion, anointings, prayers and Christian burial that it celebrates!

Like Nicodemus maybe we should say perhaps the way of the Church is the right way. Like in Jeremiah's time, let's listen rather than plot against and pray the Church continues its prophetic voice against the philosophies that degrade the human person. Let's pray the courage to believe and follow. Not to deride and divide.

God Bless,  
Msgr. John McArthur

#### Key Events This Week:

1. Saturday, April 9th or Any Day--Prayer before Planned Parenthood  
Msgr. McArthur 10:00-11:00 a.m.
2. Don't forget to bring in or send in Bishop's Appeal Pledge Card or Payment  
Our Diocese in its 40th year--Like Jeremiah and Nicodemus--Teach Christ--Preach Christ & Serve Christ
3. [Click here](#) for Service Opportunities  
We get 24 Hours Everyday  
We ask 24 Hours in a Year to Serve the Lord