

The English-Speaking Roman Catholic Community on Gozo

Patron Saint—St. Thomas More
Our website: www.escgozo.org

4th Sunday in Lent (Year B)
10 March 2024
Celebrated by
Fr. George Debrincat

*Our salvation is the free gift of a merciful
God, given to us through Jesus, His, Son.*

First Reading 2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-

All the heads of the priesthood, and the people too, added infidelity to infidelity, copying all the shameful practices of the nations and defiling the Temple that the Lord had consecrated for himself in Jerusalem. The Lord, the God of their ancestors, tirelessly sent them messenger after messenger, since he wished to spare his people and his house. But they ridiculed the messengers of God, they despised his words, they laughed at his prophets, until at last the wrath of the Lord rose so high against his people that there was no further remedy. Their enemies burned down the Temple of God, demolished the walls of Jerusalem, set fire to all its palaces, and destroyed everything of value in it. The survivors were deported by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon; they were to serve him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. This is how the word of the Lord was fulfilled that he spoke through Jeremiah, 'Until this land has enjoyed its sabbath rest, until seventy years have gone by, it will keep sabbath throughout the days of its desolation.' And in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, to fulfil the word of the Lord that was spoken through Jeremiah, the Lord roused the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia to issue a proclamation and to have it publicly displayed throughout his kingdom: 'Thus speaks Cyrus king of Persia, "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; he has ordered me to build him a Temple in Jerusalem, in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, may his God be with him! Let him go up."'

The Word of the Lord

Responsorial Psalm

**O let my tongue cleave to my mouth if
I remember you not!**

By the rivers of Babylon
there we sat and wept,
remembering Zion;
on the poplars that grew there
we hung up our harps. (R)

Hymns for Today
"To sing is to pray twice"
74 Be Thou My Vision
678 Take Our Bread
568 O Lord My God

For it was there that they asked us,
our captors, for songs,
our oppressors, for joy.
'Sing to us,' they said,
'one of Zion's songs.' (R)

O how could we sing the song of the
Lord
on alien soil?

If I forget you, Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither! (R)

O let my tongue
cleave to my mouth
if I remember you not,
if I prize not Jerusalem
above all my joys! (R)

Second Reading Ephesians 2:4-10

God loved us with so much love
that he was generous with his
mercy: when we were dead
through our sins, he brought us to
life with Christ - it is through
grace that you have been saved -
and raised us up with him and
gave us a place with him in
heaven, in Christ Jesus. This was to
show for all ages to come, through
his goodness towards us in Christ
Jesus, how infinitely rich he is in
grace. Because it is by grace that
you have been saved, through
faith; not by anything of your own,
but by a gift from God; not by
anything that you have done, so
that nobody can claim the credit.
We are God's work of art, created
in Christ Jesus to live the good life
as from the beginning he had
meant us to live it.

The word of the Lord

Memorial Acclamation

When we eat this Bread and drink this
Cup, we proclaim your death O Lord,
until you come again.

Gospel Acclamation

Glory and praise to you, O Christ!

God loved the world so much that he
gave his only Son;

Everyone who believes in him has eter-
nal life.

Glory and praise to you, O Christ

Gospel

John 3:14-21

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

'The Son of Man must be lifted up
as Moses lifted up the serpent in the
desert, so that everyone who believes may
have eternal life in him. Yes, God loved
the world so much that he gave his only
Son, so that everyone who believes in him
may not be lost but may have eternal life.
For God sent his Son into the world not to
condemn the world, but so that through
him the world might be saved. No one
who believes in him will be condemned;
but whoever refuses to believe is
condemned already, because he has
refused to believe in the name of God's
only Son. On these grounds is sentence
pronounced: that though the light has
come into the world men have shown they
prefer darkness to the light because their
deeds were evil. And indeed, everybody
who does wrong hates the light and avoids
it, for fear his actions should be exposed;
but the man who lives by the truth comes
out into the light, so that it may be plainly
seen that what he does is done in God.'

The Gospel of the Lord

Dates for your Diary

**Thursday 14th March Adoration of the
Blessed Sacrament—Ghasri Parish
Church 3.30 pm followed by
refreshments.**

**Saturday 16th March Half day retreat
9.00 am to 12.15 Booking form
available after Mass. Donation of €5 to
the Ghasri Church. Programme as
follows:**

**9.15 am Reflections led by Fr Loreto Tabone
on the Sacrament of Penance. Time for
questions.**

**10.15 am Twenty minutes break for coffee
10.35 am We move to the Parish Church.
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. A
Eucharistic Hymn is sung.
Reflection on the Sacrament of the
Anointing of the Sick led by Fr Loreto
followed by the anointing to those wishing
to receive it. A Eucharist Hymn is sung
leading to final Benediction of the Blessed
Sacrament.**

**PS A priest will be available for
confessions from 10.30 onwards**

Commentaries on Today's Readings

After considering today's readings pause now to consider the following reflections:

Fr Robert Draper

We easily think of Good Friday in sombre terms, as it is marked by betrayal, deceit, cruelty, and the death of the innocent, and yet we also recognise it as the moment of triumph over sin and death. We lift up the cross on Good Friday as the instrument of Christ's victory, and it is held aloft and acclaimed in song, it is venerated by the people, and on leaving the church the people and ministers genuflect to it. The Passion on Good Friday is from John's Gospel, because, in some ways, John portrays the Passion as a triumph. Three times he refers to the incident concerning Moses which features in today's Gospel. In the desert during the Exodus, the people continually complain against God and Moses, and God sends fiery serpents among them as a punishment; when the Hebrews plead for mercy, Moses is instructed to make a bronze serpent and raise it on high, and whoever gazes on it is cured. Jesus' words in today's Gospel reveal him as the one who will be lifted high and give life and salvation to all who gaze on him - precisely as the congregation does during the Good Friday Liturgy. The Books of Chronicles are a carefully composed history of Israel, and pointedly record Israel's infidelities and failure to keep the great covenant with God. That, it states in today's reading is precisely why things have gone so badly for Israel: they were called to be God's people of the covenant, but time and again failed to do so. Yet God has not abandoned them, indeed, once again he has offered them an opportunity to return to him, through the Persian king Cyrus. An important message is that even if the people fail to follow the covenant, it will not fail, because God is committed to Israel and God is always faithful.



Sacred Heart Seminary Chapel Enrico Mizzi Street Victoria

(car park available on Sundays & Holy Days
opposite Seminary)

Sunday Mass at 10.00 am

**The Sacrament of
Confession**

**is heard before Mass. Please allow
time before Mass is due to
commence**

Our chaplain:

Father Loretu Tabone:

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**The collection for last Sunday was
€177.24. All monies collected are
deployed to cover the costs of
running our community and for
good causes**

We Pray For...

Those in our community who need
our prayers, and all our relatives
and friends who are in need and
those who have died.

**Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for
March**

**Let us pray that those who risk their
lives for the Gospel in various parts
of the world might imbue the
Church with their courage and
missionary drive.**

Dom Henry Wansbrough's reflection

After Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus comes this reflection on Nicodemus' visit. Is it Jesus' reflection or the evangelist's? The text does not make it clear. Throughout the gospel of John people are coming to Jesus and judging themselves by their reactions to Jesus. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son. In his turn the Son does not judge, but we judge ourselves by our reaction to him. So at the wedding at Cana the disciples believe in him and see his glory. In the Temple the Jews refuse belief and are condemned. Then comes Nicodemus in secret and in fear. At this point he is sitting on the fence, afraid of the Pharisees - but by the time of the burial he has decided for Jesus. After Nicodemus the Samaritan woman approaches Jesus. Cheeky and unbelieving at first, she is won over by Jesus' playful persistence. And so on - the Jews on one side, the man healed at the Pool of Bethzatha on the other: the Jews on one side, the man blind from birth on the other. The decision is ours too. When confronted by Jesus, do we come to the light so that our deeds may be known, or do we shun the light?

PRAYER AT THE END OF MASS

As suggested by His Holiness, Pope Francis:

Holy Michael, Archangel,
defend us in the day of battle:
Be our safeguard against the
wickedness and snares of the devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray:
and do thou, Prince of the heavenly
host, by the power of God thrust down
to hell, Satan, and all wicked spirits
who wander through the world for the
ruin of souls.

FOOTNOTES

**"Men lose all the material things they
leave behind them in this world, but
they carry with them the reward of
their charity and the alms they
give." — Saint Francis of Assisi**

**"The less we have, the more we give.
Seems absurd, but it's the logic of
love." — Mother Teresa**

**"During Lent, let us find concrete ways
to overcome our indifference."
Pope Francis**

**"Be joyful in hope, patient in afflic-
tion, faithful in prayer." — Romans
12:12**

Readers Rota

10-Mar	Readings Tom Welch	Prayers Johanna Marks
17-Mar	Readings Johanna Marks	Prayers Aimee Vant
24-Mar	Readings Aimee Vant	Prayers Mary Newman
31-Mar	Readings Mary Newman	Prayers Stella Woodgate
07-Apr	Readings Stella Woodgate	Prayers Angelika Camilleri
14-Apr	Readings Angelika Camilleri	Prayers Chris Holland
21-Apr	Readings Chris Holland	Prayers Rachel Holland
28-Apr	Readings Rachel Holland	Prayers Emilia Aquilina-Gray
05-May	Readings Emilia Aquilina-Gray	Prayers Andy Young