



Mary, Mother of Mercy Parish

<https://www.mary-mom.com/small-groups>

Gospel Reflection Small Group

Outline for week beginning March 14, 2021

Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year B

Lectionary: 31, 32

Opening Prayer:

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: Lord God, we open our hearts, minds and souls to worship to you. Thank you that today we dwell in your kingdom and live in your presence. Thank you that as we gather together we join with all Catholic Christians across the world to glorify your holy name. Come be with us, inspire us and lead us in our time together. We ask all this in the beautiful name of Jesus. Amen.

This Day in the Church:

Saint Matilda of Saxony

Also known as

- Matilda of Ringelheim
- Matilda, Queen of Germany
- Mathilde, Mathildis, Maud

Profile

Daughter of Count Dietrich of Westphalia and Reinhild of Denmark; she was raised by her grandmother, abbess of the Eufurt. In 913, Matilda left the abbey, and married King Henry the Fowler of Saxony (Henry I), who had received an annulment from a previous marriage. Queen of Germany. Mother of Otto, Holy Roman Emperor; Henry the Quarrelsome, Duke of Bavaria; Saint Bruno the Great, Archbishop of Cologne, Germany; Gerberga, wife of King Louis IV of France; Hedwig, mother of Hugh



Capet. Founded several Benedictine abbeys. Well known throughout the realm for her generosity, she taught the ignorant, comforted the sick, and visited prisoners. Betrayed by Otto after Henry's death when he falsely accused her of financial mismanagement.

Born

c.895 at Engern, Westphalia, Germany

Died

- 14 March 968 at Quedlinburg, Germany of natural causes
- buried in the monastery at Quedlinburg

Patronage

- death of children
- disappointing children
- falsely accused people
- large families
- people ridiculed for their piety
- queens
- second marriages
- widows

Representation

- alms
- bag of money
- crown
- orb
- sceptre
- purse, indicative of her generosity
- queen with a whip
- queen holding a church

Gospel Reading Background:

Nicodemus

Gospel Reading:

John 3:14-21

¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

Reflections:

1. What phrase or phrases mean the most to you? Why?
2. Who do you identify most with? Why?
3. How does this passage relate to:
 - a. You personally?
 - b. You spiritually?
 - c. Your relationship to others?
4. Most people focus on John 3:16-18, why? How do verses 19-20 put this in perspective?

Study Guide:

- a. **3:14 Lifted up:** in Nm 21:9, Moses simply “mounted” a serpent upon a pole. John here substitutes a verb implying glorification. Jesus, exalted to glory at his cross and resurrection, represents healing for all.

- b. 3:15 **Eternal life**: used here for the first time in John, this term stresses quality of life rather than duration.
- c. 3:16 **Gave**: as a gift in the incarnation, and also “over to death” in the crucifixion; cf. Rom 8:32.
- d. 3:17–19 **Condemn**: the Greek root means both judgment and condemnation. Jesus’ purpose is to save, but his coming provokes judgment; some condemn themselves by turning from the light.
- e. 3:19 Judgment is not only future but is partially realized here and now.

Reference to Old Testament Prophecy

Numbers 21:6-9

⁶So the LORD sent among the people seraph serpents, which bit the people so that many of the Israelites died. ⁷Then the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned in complaining against the LORD and you. Pray to the LORD to take the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people, ⁸and the LORD said to Moses: Make a seraph and mount it on a pole, and everyone who has been bitten will look at it and recover. ⁹Accordingly Moses made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever the serpent bit someone, the person looked at the bronze serpent and recovered.

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

I. WHY DID THE WORD BECOME FLESH?

456 With the Nicene Creed, we answer by confessing: "For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." 457 The Word became flesh for us in order to save us by reconciling us with God, who "loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins": "the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world", and "he was revealed to take away sins":

Sick, our nature demanded to be healed; fallen, to be raised up; dead, to rise again. We had lost the possession of the good; it was necessary for it to be given back to us. Closed in the darkness, it was necessary to bring us the light; captives, we awaited a Saviour; prisoners, help; slaves, a liberator. Are these things minor or insignificant? Did they not move God to descend to human nature and visit it, since humanity was in so miserable and unhappy a state?

458 The Word became flesh so that thus we might know God's love: "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him." "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

459 The Word became flesh to be our model of holiness: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me." "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." On the mountain of the Transfiguration, the Father commands: "Listen to him!" Jesus is the model for the Beatitudes and the norm of the new law: "Love one another as I have loved you." This love implies an effective offering of oneself, after his example.

460 The Word became flesh to make us "partakers of the divine nature": "For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God." "For the Son of God became man so that we might become God." "The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods."

Group Intercessions:

[Ask each participant if they have any specific prayer intentions that they would like the group to pray for. It may be a good idea to start a group prayer intention book and the leader can read from it each week and add new requests as needed.]

Closing Prayer:

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: Lord, your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Thank you that we can live in your light and walk in your truth. May the things that you have revealed and thoughts that we have shared dwell in our hearts and stir us to action. We ask all this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.