

Donnybrook

14 September 2021

Welcome

Sometimes, tradition, even venerable tradition, has to be set aside in favour of Scripture.

Topic

A good example is today's reading from John 3.

Steps

When I was growing up, we were told the story of salvation like this. Adam was a real historical figure; he committed the original sin in the garden of Eden; God was offended and angry and demanded the paying of a just price. Jesus, being God and human, was able to pay the price by dying on the cross.

When you read the Gospel according to John, there is awareness of sin but no mention of Adam's sin. In this Gospel, God is not offended and angry. The cross is not a punishment undergone to pay a price to God. On the contrary, the cross is the disclosure of the love of God. God is motivated by love, as we just heard.

So what is the teaching of the fourth Gospel? God is love and out of love for humanity he wants to heal us – not just from sin but from the power of death. God's love brought him to the heart of human darkness, in order to show the astonishing extent of his love. The image from the first reading is powerful: the lifting up is a physical image of crucifixion and a spiritual image of the resurrection.

Conclusion

It is not too much to say this: God's love led God to serve broken humanity in Jesus' death and resurrection, to set us free from death as the final absurdity, to heal us that we may live life in abundance. In a word, to love us, as the Gospel said. No other religion is saying this. This is what we celebrate everyday at Mass.