

Fr. Gerry Hurley  
Fourth Sunday of Lent

John 3:16

I sometimes muse to myself when I hear a powerful word of Jesus in the Scriptures, "Did I miss that? Was I absent that day?"

John 3:16 may be the most referenced Scripture passage in the world. It is not uncommon at major sporting events, for example the Super Bowl, the Masters, or others to find somebody carrying a placard that says, "John 3:16." It is amazing how that person so often manages to get in front of the camera and display the sign.

Many years ago, I thought this was just some kind of a fanatic, or nut, or crazy person. Today, I choose to think very differently. I think, "What a courageous person!" This person is inviting us to look up the verse John 3:16 in our reference book -- our Bible.

It is the greatest news of the Christian experience. ***"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."***

Wow! How beautiful is that!!! That is the central truth of Christianity -- the great mystery of our God and His love for us.

Now when I see those signs at a sporting fixture, I ask myself, "What am I doing to proclaim this great truth? I may not need to hold a banner, but it is certainly a message I want to proclaim.

The very next line does not get near as much attention. But, it is equally important, and certainly worthy of proclamation. Maybe I should pull out a banner that says, "John 3:17." That verse says, ***"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."***

Yes, I sometimes muse to myself, "Was I missing from school that day, that week, that month, that year when they proclaimed that truth?" God did not send His Son to condemn the world.

Where did we get all of those crazy images of a mean, angry, demanding, unrelenting, unforgiving God? -- A monarch who was happy only when all subjects were subdued into obedient submission!

Or, was it just me?