

## Devotion, Fourth Week of Lent, March 10, 2024

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The reading for the fourth week of Lent is Isaiah 43:1-7. It was written to exiles in Babylon who longed to come home, and it is a powerful expression of God's love for Israel – indeed, for all of us today:

But now thus says the Lord,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:  
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name; you are mine.  
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you,  
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.  
For I am the Lord your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.  
I give Egypt as your ransom,  
Cush and Seba in exchange for you.  
Because you are precious in my sight  
and honored and I love you,  
I give people in return for you,  
nations in exchange for your life.  
Do not fear, for I am with you;  
I will bring your offspring from the east,  
and from the west I will gather you;  
I will say to the north, "Give them up,"  
and to the south, "Do not withhold;  
bring my sons from far away  
and my daughters from the end of the earth—  
everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made."

This promise by God applies to all of us who feel isolated, and for all of those people across the world who have been exiled from their native lands due to violence, famine, and political upheaval. May we remember them this week as we thank God for loving us.

*Jeanne*