

March 22, 2020

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

READING I

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

The LORD said to Samuel: "Fill your horn with oil, and be on your way. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen my king from among his sons."

As Jesse and his sons came to the sacrifice, Samuel looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is here before him." But the LORD said to Samuel: "Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the LORD looks into the heart." In the same way Jesse presented seven sons before Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any one of these." Then Samuel asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" Jesse replied, "There is still the youngest, who is tending the sheep." Samuel said to Jesse, "Send for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until he arrives here." Jesse sent and had the young man brought to them. He was ruddy,

a youth handsome to behold and making a splendid appearance. The LORD said, "There — anoint him, for this is the one!" Then Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed David in the presence of his brothers; and from that day on, the spirit of the LORD rushed upon David.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6 (1)

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
In verdant pastures
he gives me repose;
beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul. R.

He guides me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk in the
dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at
my side
with your rod and your staff
that give me courage. R.

You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows. R.

Only goodness and kindness
follow me
all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in
the house of the LORD
for years to come. R.

READING II

Ephesians 5:8–14

Brothers and sisters: You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them, for it is shameful even to mention the things done by them in secret; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light.

Therefore, it says:

“Awake, O sleeper,
and arise from the dead,
and Christ will give you light.”

GOSPEL

John 9:1, 6–9, 13–17, 34–38

Longer: John 9:1–41

As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, “Go wash in the Pool of Siloam” — which means Sent — . So he went and washed, and came back able to see.

His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, “Isn’t this the one who used to sit and beg?” Some said, “It is,” but others said, “No, he just looks like him.” He said, “I am.”

They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees. Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a sabbath. So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. He said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see.” So some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a sinful man do such signs?” And there was a division among them. So

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they said to the blind man again, “What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

They answered and said to him, “You were born totally in sin, and are you trying to teach us?” Then they threw him out.

When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered and said, “Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “I do believe, Lord,” and he worshiped him.

Practice of Hope

Today’s Gospel speaks about blindness in all its forms—physical, emotional, and spiritual. Jesus healed a man, blind from birth, who went to the Pharisees but they denied the miracle had happened. Many of us wear blinders as we go through our day because we fail to recognize how God works through

people and circumstances. We may neglect the goodness that surrounds us because it doesn’t fit within parameters of science or reason.

♦ Journal about ways in which you might be blind to your value as God’s child. In this season of Lent, say prayers of thanksgiving for the people and opportunities that have made you more spiritually alive and attentive to others. ♦ Treasure your vision and make an appointment with an optometrist if it has been a while since your last visit. Update your prescription to help you fully appreciate all of God’s creation.

Download more questions and activities for families, Christian initiation groups, and other adult groups at <http://www.ltp.org/ahw>.

Scripture Insights

Our God is a God of surprises. This is evident in our First Reading, where God directs the anointing of David. Samuel, the prophet, goes to Jesse of Bethlehem to anoint one of his eight sons as king. Although Samuel is impressed by the stature of the eldest son, God rejects him, saying: “Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance, but the LORD looks into the heart.” David, the youngest son, still a shepherd boy, is chosen to be anointed.

Today’s Gospel account of Jesus’ healing a man born blind is one of seven signs in John’s Gospel. It signifies that Jesus’ power to heal extends beyond physical blindness to spiritual blindness. The healing initiates a dialogue among the man born blind, Jesus, and the Pharisees. On first encountering the man born blind, Jesus takes the initiative. He rubs clay on the man’s eyes and instructs him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. The man follows Jesus’ instructions and is healed. The Pharisees refuse to believe. They reject Jesus because he broke their

law by healing on the Sabbath. Here is another example of the God of surprises working in ways that human beings refuse to accept.

Later, Jesus meets the man he had healed. When Jesus identifies himself as the Son of Man, the man immediately responds: “I do believe, Lord,” and he worships him. This man has moved from the gift of physical sight to the deeper gift of “spiritual sight.” This miracle reflects our relationship with Jesus. Before Baptism, we were spiritually blind. After being washed in the waters of Baptism, we entered a deeper personal relationship with Jesus.

- ◆ How does God surprise people in both the First Reading and the Gospel reading?
- ◆ What does Paul mean in the Second Reading when he calls us to “live as children of the light”?
- ◆ How has God surprised you?