

Reflecting On Sunday's Readings

Fourth Sunday of Lent — March 22, 2020

First Reading — 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13

¹The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." ... ⁶When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD'S anointed is before him." ⁷But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." ... ¹⁰And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." ¹¹And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he comes here." ¹²And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." ¹³Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

Responsorial Psalm PS 23: 1-3A, 3B-4, 5, 6.

R. (1) **The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.

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

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

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

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

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

Second Reading — Ephesians 5:8-14

⁸ For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; ¹³but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. ¹⁴Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light."

Gospel Reading — John 9:1-41

¹ As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. ²And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³Jesus answered, "It was not that this man

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sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” ⁶As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man’s eyes with the clay, ⁷saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. ⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, “Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?” ⁹ Some said, “It is he”; others said, “No, but he is like him.” He said, “I am the man.” ¹⁰ They said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” ¹¹He answered, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash’; so I went and washed and received my sight.” ¹²They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.” ¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. ¹⁵The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.” ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” There was a division among them. ¹⁷So they again said to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.” ¹⁸The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight, ¹⁹and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” ²⁰His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself.” ²² His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if any one should confess him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. ²³Therefore his parents said, “He is of age, ask him.” ²⁴So for the

second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner.” ²⁵He answered, “Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see.” ²⁶They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” ²⁷He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become his disciples?” ²⁸And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” ³⁰The man answered, “Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if any one is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. ³²Never since the world began has it been heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” ³⁴ They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out.

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God...

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

First Reading — 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13

1. Explain what it means to be blind spiritually and to see spiritually.
2. How can we, like Samuel, avoid the mistake of judging people on their outward appearance?

Second Reading — Ephesians 5:8-14

3. Contrast the options for living expressed in this passage, that are available for every Christian.
4. Why should someone choose living life in the light over living life in the darkness?

Gospel Reading — John 9:1-41

5. With whom do you most identify in this story?
6. How do you think one feels who is spiritually blind?
7. What are the various ways people can respond when confronted with a work of Christ in another's life?
8. What truths did Jesus reveal about spiritual blindness?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with a final prayer.