

Rev. Randall Hubbard  
1 Samuel 1:1b, 6-7, 10-13a  
Ephesians 5:8-14  
John 9:1-41

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**Epiphany Catholic Church**  
Louisville, KY, USA  
March 19, 2023

So we've come together on this Fourth Sunday of Lent, also known as Laetare Sunday, a Day to Rejoice. And we rejoice for lots of different reasons. You know, Lent is half over now. That's a lot to rejoice about. But we rejoice also that there's only half of Lent left. And we also rejoice that the season of Lent is a season that calls us to that deeper relationship with God. That gives us that strength, that courage to do that kind of self-examine during this 40 day journey. And that we are ever mindful of that love of our God that we prepare to celebrate come Easter. And as we come here on this Laetare Sunday, we're ever mindful that it is God's love that gathers us together. It is God's love that we rejoice in this day knowing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the one sent to redeem us. And that's a lot to rejoice in.

Now, if you recall last weekend, towards the end of mass, you all acknowledged my birthday. It was a significant birthday. It was number 65. I am now a card carrying Medicare person. So, got my card. It's in my wallet. I'm good. But I just share that with you because it gave me pause. This is a significant birthday and to pause on other significant birthdays in my life. And, as I look back, I have to say the most difficult birthday was 25. That was the most difficult birthday, 25. And, it was a time I was in transition. Wasn't quite sure what my future held for me. And, there was just a lot going on. Just lots and lots and lots of questions. And, a lot of struggle during that timeline. But I'll have to say it got a whole lot better, a whole lot better. God with me guiding me through those years, and I'm ever grateful for that. But then you turn 40. When I turned 40, a number of people said, well, the first thing to go is the eyes. The first thing to go is the eyes. Sure enough, two months after my 40th birthday, I needed glasses. Five years later, I needed bifocals. But nonetheless, I share that with you because it's sort of like, as we age and as we go through our life journey, we are ever mindful of those changes that happen in our lives.

Hopefully, as we're going through our lives that we are ever aware at those different times the significance of what we experienced. While it may be difficult and challenging, that God is there with us to lead us and to guide us. And especially as we consider our gospel on this Fourth Sunday of Lent; a familiar gospel passage from John, where we hear the story of the man born blind. And again we just heard it in terms of Jesus healing this man. Again, the man didn't ask to be healed. The question that prompted the healing was the disciples asking the simple question, who sinned - this man or his parents - for the cause of him being born blind? Who sinned? And Jesus makes it very clear from the very beginning. He says, it wasn't sin that caused his blindness. It wasn't his sin or his parents' sin. No sin caused the blindness. His blindness and the healing are to show the glory of God. The glory of God. And again, setting that framework that this man born blind now is a means by which others come to see the glory of God.

It's interesting. He who's born blind becomes that means for others to see, to see the glory of God. And as we heard the story, we even saw this development, this transition, as he gained insight into Jesus and who he is, that when asked by the Pharisees, well, what do you have to say of him? He says, well, he's a prophet. And then as the story goes on, when Jesus approaches him and asks him if he believes in the son of man, the Christ, the Messiah, he says, well, who is he that I might believe in Him? And Jesus says, I am Him. And he immediately says, Lord, I believe. And we see this progression of his faith, of his healing, of his vision being restored. He who was born blind now fully sees who Jesus is. The glory of God manifested through Jesus.

And as we come here, as a people of faith, and during this lenten time, it gives us that pause to ask ourselves questions around, do we approach faith eyes wide open? Or do we approach faith eyes wide shut? Are we willing to be honest with ourselves as we go through life to ask ourselves those hard kinds of questions as we examine our lives, our attitudes, our actions, our behaviors; those hard questions that help us to open ourselves ever more so to the glory of our God, the love of our God.

So on this Fourth Sunday of Lent, this Laetare Sunday, this Sunday of rejoicing, we rejoice in God giving us that means to be a people of faith. The grace that we need to continue to grow in our awareness of God's love and God's presence to us. God sees us, as we heard in our first reading from the first Book of Samuel, God sees into our hearts. God knows us in our hearts. And the question for us is, what God sees is that what we see? And hopefully the two are very close in our vision of that with God that how God sees us, we too see ourselves as beloved, as children of

God, as ones that God puts into motion this plan of salvation that finds its fulfillment in Jesus.

We come here as a people of faith, and we are reminded that we are to be that light of Christ, that we're reminded in our second reading to the Ephesians. That we, our belief in Jesus Christ, our opening ourselves to that light of Christ that we received in baptism - remember, that's part of the ritual - as the candle is lit, receive the light of Christ. And then we're told to keep this light burning brightly throughout our lives, brightly not only for ourselves to open ourselves more so to that love of God, but also that light of Christ that shines out to others; that gives others that hope; that invites them to come, too, to be persons of faith; to trust in God's love and God's goodness.

And so we come here, and we come here as a people during this Lenten time on this Lenten journey, asked to open our eyes to the wonder of our God's love and our God's goodness and the glory of that God that manifests itself in our lives. And we pray for that wisdom, that understanding, that ability to trust that God is with us, that God sees us through, that our eyes may ever be open to that love of God that is shown us each day so that we can be that Easter people that we are called to be - that people who rejoice in the love of God each day and every day of our lives.