

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT



Light for the Journey

Father of light,
you see differently than humans.
You chose the young David as your
anointed king of Israel.
Anoint us with the oil of gladness,
we pray,
and help us learn what is pleasing
to you.
Your Son, our gentle Shepherd,
leads us out of darkness, awakening
the light of our faith,
and gives us strength to keep our
Lenten disciplines.
Illumine the path as we continue
our journey
to the holy mountain of Easter.
We ask this through our Lord
Jesus Christ,
your Son, who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Sunday, March 30, 2014

“Surely we are not blind, are we?”



Today's Readings: 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6–7, 10–13a; Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6 (1); Ephesians 5:8–14; John 9:1–41. Today's Gospel is about choosing between spiritual blindness and spiritual sight. The Pharisees cannot move beyond their limited worldview. They bully the blind man in order to find fault with Jesus. Perhaps in some areas we cannot move from limited views either. Lent is the time to remove blinders that hinder us from acting out of the light of Christ, from recognizing the beauty of each human person—a reflection of the face of God. Jesus wants to give both physical and spiritual sight.

Catechumens have been gradually moving from the darkness of a life not illuminated by the light of Christ to a

life of Christian radiance. In another public ritual of the Church called the second scrutiny, we pray for light for their continuing journey toward faith in Christ. We, too, continue our own movement from the darkness of sin and self-absorption. We commit ourselves once again to the Good Shepherd, who chooses and sustains us in his light, even when we find ourselves in the “dark valley.”

Consider lighting a candle each evening at the family dinner table and talking about living in the glow of Christ. For a deeper appreciation of light, first spend a few moments sitting in complete darkness and silence. Go around the table, letting each person describe the experience of light after darkness. How does Christ bring light to your life?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 31

New Life

Today's Scriptures are filled with images of new life and second chances. In the midst of weeping, sickness, and death, the Lord provides life. For believers, this new life flows from faith in God's providence through the healing hand of Christ. Are you called to minister to the sick and homebound in your community? Consider training to bring Holy Communion and God's Word to the sick. Today's Readings: Isaiah 65:17–21; Psalm 30:2 and 4, 5–6, 11–12a and 13b (2a); John 4:43–54.

Tuesday, April 1

Wade in the Water!

Jesus poses a question in today's Gospel: "Do you want to be made well?" The waters of Bethseda and those flowing from the threshold of the Temple in today's Ezekiel reading remind us of our Baptism. We all strive for wholeness, wellness, and holiness. Let us continue to walk with the elect on the holy road to the Easter sacraments. Find the words to the Gospel spiritual "Wade in the Water" at <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/pattygriffin/wadeinthewater.html> and reflect on its baptismal imagery. Today's Readings: Ezekiel 47:1–9, 12; Psalm 46:2–3, 5–6, 8–9 (8); John 5:1–16.

Wednesday, April 2

Passing from Death to Life

Just as Isaiah speaks God's words of a future comfort and restoration, John describes Jesus saying that soon the dead in their tombs will hear his voice and come out! Defending his healing work against those who protest that he does it on the Sabbath, he says, "My Father is still working, and I also am working." Who in your life needs to anticipate Easter through these hopeful words? How could you be a source of comfort and hope to them? Today's Readings: Isaiah 49:8–15; Psalm 145:8–9, 13cd–14, 17–18 (8a); John 5:17–30.

Thursday, April 3

Losing Trust

We hear much about Moses during Lent. He followed God's instructions and led the Israelites out of Egypt and through the wilderness. He brought the Ten Commandments to the people, who promised to be faithful to them. In today's episode, the people have quickly lost trust in God and are worshipping a golden calf! God calls them a stubborn, "stiff-necked" people and plans to punish them. But Moses implores and God relents. In what ways do we sometimes lose trust in God? Have you ever implored God? What happened? Today's Readings: Exodus 32:7–14; Psalm 106:19–20, 21–22, 23 (4a); John 5:31–47.

Friday, April 4

Saint Isidore

Isidore was born around the year 560, and was educated in the cathedral school of Seville, Spain. He became a learned bishop who promoted education and compiled a famous encyclopedia. In the Gospel, Jesus responds to those who are sure he's only an imposter from Galilee: "You know me, and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true." What do you think Jesus was sent to do? What especially has he been sent to do for you today? Today's Readings: Wisdom 2:1a, 12–22; Psalm 34:17–18, 19–20, 21 and 23 (19a); John 7:1–2, 10, 25–30.

Saturday, April 5

Let Justice Reign!

In today's Gospel we hear about plots against Jesus. The authorities are alarmed over his growing popularity; arguments break out about who he might be. Nicodemus defends Jesus, citing the law that no one should be condemned without "a hearing to find out what they are doing." Do we condemn others without hearing the complete story? Let us act with justice and upright hearts. Today's Readings: Jeremiah 11:18–20; Psalm 7:2–3, 9bc–10, 11–12 (2a); John 7:40–53.

