

## FIRST READING – A LENT 4

A reading from the first book of Samuel.

**Pause – and look up at the assembly**

The Lord said to Samuel,  
“Fill your horn with oil and set out;  
I will send you to Jesse of Bethlehem,  
for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.”

Jesse = JESS-ih

When the sons of Jesse came,  
Samuel looked on Eliab and thought,  
“Surely the Lord’s anointed is now before the Lord.”

Eliab = ih-LIGH-ab

But 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 does not see as the human sees;  
the human looks on the outward appearance,  
but the Lord looks on the heart.”

Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel,  
and Samuel said to Jesse,

“The Lord has not chosen any of these.”  
Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?”

And he said, “There remains yet the youngest,  
but he is keeping the sheep.”

And Samuel said to Jesse,  
“Send and bring him;  
for we will not sit down until he comes here.”

Jesse sent and brought David in.

Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome.

The Lord said,

“Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.”

Then Samuel took the horn of oil,  
and anointed him in the presence of his brothers;  
and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David  
from that day forward.

**Pause for THREE seconds**

**then look up at the people and say SLOWLY:**

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*



## **SECOND READING – A LENT 4**

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians.

**Pause – and look up at the assembly**

Brothers and sisters:

Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light.

Live as children of light –

for the fruit of the light is found  
in all that is good and right and true.

Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.

Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness,  
but instead expose them.

For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly;  
but everything exposed by the light becomes visible,  
for everything that becomes visible is light.

Therefore it is said,

“Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

**Pause for THREE seconds**

**then look up at the people**

**and say SLOWLY:**

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## GOSPEL READING – A LENT 4

The Lord be with you.

*And with your spirit.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

*Glory to you, O Lord*

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth.

His disciples asked him,

“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents,  
that he was born blind?”

Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned;  
he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.

We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day;  
night is coming when no one can work.

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

When he had said this, he spat on the ground  
and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes,  
saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam”  
(which means Sent).

Then the man who was blind went and washed and came back able to see.

The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar  
began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?”

Some were saying, “It is he.”

Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.”

He kept saying, “I am the man.”

But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?”

He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes,  
and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’

Then I went and washed and received my sight.”

They said to him, “Where is he?”

He said, “I do not know.”

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.

Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.

Then the Pharisees also began to ask him

how he had received his sight.

He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes.

Then I washed, and now I see.”



## **GOSPEL READING (CTD.) – A LENT 4**

Some of the Pharisees said,  
“This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.”  
But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?”  
And they were divided.  
So they said again to the blind man,  
“What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.”  
He said, “He is a prophet.”  
They 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  
and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind?  
How then does he now see?”  
His parents answered, “We know that this is our son,  
and that he was born blind;  
but we do not know how it is that now he sees,  
nor do we know who opened his eyes.  
Ask him; he is of age.  
He will speak for himself.”  
His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities,  
who had already agreed  
that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah  
would be put out of the synagogue.  
Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”  
So for the second time they called the man who had been blind,  
and they said to him, “Give glory to God!  
We know that this man is a sinner.”  
He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner.  
One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”  
They said to him, “What did he do to you?  
How did he open your eyes?”  
He answered them,  
“I have told you already, and you would not listen.  
Why do you want to hear it again?  
Do you also want to become his disciples?”  
Then they reviled him, saying,  
“You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.  
We know that God has spoken to Moses,  
but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.”  
The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing!  
You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.



## **GOSPEL READING (CTD.) – A LENT 4**

We know that God does not listen to sinners,  
but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will.  
Never since the world began has it been heard  
that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.  
If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”  
They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins,  
and are you trying to teach us?”  
And they drove him out.  
Jesus heard that they had driven him out,  
and when he found him, he said,  
“Do you believe in the Son of Man?”  
He answered, “And who is he, sir?  
Tell me, so that I may believe in him.”  
Jesus said to him,  
“You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.”  
He said, “Lord, I believe.”  
And he worshipped him.  
Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment  
so that those who do not see may see,  
and those who do see may become blind.”  
Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him,  
“Surely we are not blind, are we?”  
Jesus said to them,  
“If you were blind, you would not have sin.  
But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.



The **GOSPEL** of the **LORD**.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

The purpose of the Lenten readings is to prepare for the participation in the paschal feast.

The Old Testament readings focus upon salvation history as the presupposition of, preparation for, and in some respects a prefiguring of, the redemptive act of God in Christ.

The second readings set forth our participation in the death and resurrection of Christ through baptism and in the Christian life.

The gospel readings of series A, after the accounts of the temptation and the transfiguration, which are traditional on the first two Sundays, take up the great Johannine signs, which are prefigurations both of the saving events of Christ's death and resurrection and of our participation in those saving events through baptism.

### **Reading I: 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a**

As already noted, the Lenten readings from the OT form an independent series of highlights in Israel's salvation history. The story of David's anointing as king is told in such a way as to emphasize that his selection and the resulting stabilizing of the monarchy were due to divine initiative.

The people had no part in this selection. Nor was it Samuel's idea. Even when the prophet submits to God's direction, God overrules him by choosing the youngest and apparently least qualified brother. Samuel's preference for the eldest brother proved wrong, thus foreshadowing the popular but misguided hope for a powerful Messiah.

The shorter reading of the Roman Lectionary omits the unessential though picturesque details of the story that provide dramatic contrast and local color.

### **Responsorial Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6\***

It is not clear whether this psalm was chosen to go with the first reading or whether it was first suggested by the traditional, though originally fortuitous, association of this Sunday with the idea of refreshment. In Christian usage, "Lord" can of course be interpreted to mean Christ.

The third stanza, which speaks of the Lord's anointing the psalmist's head with oil, suggests some link with the anointing of David in the first reading, but the typology is too complicated to develop profitably in a homily. Those responsible should either explain their intentions or revise their choice.

## **Reading II: Ephesians 5:8-14**

This reading overlaps with the old epistle of the Roman Missal for the third Sunday of Lent. In the Book of Common Prayer, that epistle was lengthened to run through verse 14, as here. It seems to have had a fortuitous connection with the station Mass at St. Lawrence celebrated on that day at Rome.

But its baptismal associations (a catechesis based on the contrasts once/now, darkness/light and the concluding quotation from an early baptismal hymn) have always made this passage highly suitable for Lent. Now it becomes even more appropriate as a complement to the gospel, with its message of Jesus as the light of the world.

## **Gospel: John 9:1-41**

The most likely explanation of the seven miracles (signs) in the Fourth Gospel is that they existed together in a “Book of Signs” and that the evangelist used them as the basis for his discourses or dialogues.

The original story in today’s Gospel must have simply told how a man was born blind and was healed by Jesus. This was later expanded by a trial scene, in which the man was charged with having become an adherent of Jesus. This stage of development reflects the expulsion of Jewish converts to Christianity from the synagogue. The evangelist then added the christological elements, such as verses 4-5, which declare Jesus to be the light of the world, and the discussion about his origins as contrasted with Moses (Jn 9:29-34).

Thus, the healing of the blind man is, for the evangelist, a Christological sign—it shows that Christ is the light that has come into the darkness of the world. In other words, he is the revelation of God.

It is easy to see how the healing of a blind man would lend itself to such christological treatment. Moreover, the mode of healing—washing in the pool of Siloam—suggests a further connection with baptism, which in the early Church was known as “illumination” (photismos).

The short form of the Gospel reduces the story more or less to its original narrative form, omitting most of the features derived from the church-synagogue relations and the evangelist’s christological insertions. Inadvertently, however, this has the effect of removing what was, for the evangelist, the main point of the story (Jesus as the light of the world) and its connection with the second reading (“Christ shall give you light”). Fortunately, the versicle before the Gospel preserves the theme of light. It is thus imperative that verse 5 be restored to the short form.

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