

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Year A

### First Reading

1 Samuel 16:1. 6-7. 10-13

*David is anointed king of Israel.*

A reading from the first book of Samuel

The Lord said to Samuel, 'Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen myself a king among his sons.'

When Samuel arrived, he caught sight of Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed one stands there before him,' but the Lord said to Samuel, 'Take no notice of his appearance or his height for I have rejected him; God does not see as man sees; man looks at appearances but the Lord looks at the heart.'

Jesse presented his seven sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen these.' He then asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' He answered, 'There is still one left, the youngest; he is out looking after the sheep.' Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send for him; we will not sit down to eat until he comes.' Jesse had him sent for, a boy of fresh complexion, with fine eyes and pleasant bearing. The Lord said, 'Come, anoint him, for The one.' At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him where he stood with his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day on.

The word of the Lord.

### Responsorial Psalm

Ps 22. v. 1

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

1 The Lord is my shepherd;  
there is nothing I shall want.  
Fresh and green are the pastures  
where he gives me repose.  
Near restful waters he leads me,  
to revive my drooping spirit. ℟.

2 He guides me along the right path;  
he is true to his name.  
If I should walk in the valley of darkness  
no evil would I fear.  
You are there with your crook and your staff;  
with these you give me comfort. ℟.

3 You have prepared a banquet for me  
in the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil;  
my cup is overflowing. ℟.

4 Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me  
all the days of my life.  
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell  
for ever and ever. ℟.

## Second Reading

Ephesians 5:8-14

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

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth. Try to discover what the Lord wants of you, having nothing to do with the futile works of darkness but exposing them by contrast. The things which are done in secret are things that people are ashamed even to speak of; but anything exposed by the light will be illuminated and anything illuminated turns into light. That is why it is said:

Wake up from your sleep,  
rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

The word of the Lord.

## Gospel Acclamation

Jn 8:12

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!  
I am the light of the world, says the Lord;  
anyone who follows me will have the light of life.  
Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!

## Gospel

John 9:1-41

*He went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?' 'Neither he nor his parents sinned,' Jesus answered 'he was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

'As long as the day lasts  
I must carry out the work of the one who sent me;  
the night will soon be here when no one can work.  
As long as I am in the world  
I am the light of the world.'

Having said this, he spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.' So they said to him, 'Then how do your eyes come to be open?' 'The man called Jesus' he answered 'made a paste, daubed my eyes with it and said to me, "Go and wash at Siloam"; so I went, and when I washed I could see.' They asked, 'Where is he?' 'I don't know' he answered.

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath.' Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them, So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet' replied the man.

However, the Jews would not believe that the man had been blind and had gained his sight, without first sending for his parents and asking them, 'Is this man really your son who you say was born blind? If so how is it that he is now able to see?' His parents answered, 'We know he is our son and we know he was born blind, but we don't know how it is that he can see now, or who opened his eyes. He is old enough: let him speak for himself.' His parents spoke like this out of fear of the Jews, who had already agreed to expel from the synagogue anyone who should acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. This was why his parents said, 'He is old enough; ask him.'

So the Jews again sent for the man and said to him, 'Give glory to God! For our part, we know that this man is a sinner.' The man answered, 'I don't know if he is a sinner; I only know that I was blind and now I can see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He replied, 'I have told you once and you wouldn't listen. Why do you want to hear it all again? Do you want to become his disciples too?' At this they hurled abuse at him: 'You can be his disciple,' they said 'we are disciples of Moses: we know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we don't know where he comes from.' The man replied, 'Now here is an astonishing thing! He has opened my eyes and you don't know where he comes from! We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but God does listen to men who are devout and do his will. Ever since the world began it is unheard of for anyone to open the eyes of a man who was born blind; if this man were not from God, he couldn't do a thing.' 'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and worshipped him.

Jesus said:

'It is for judgement  
that I have come into this world,  
so that those without sight may see  
and those with sight turn blind.'

Hearing this, some Pharisees who were present said to him, 'We are not blind, surely?'

Jesus replied:

'Blind? If you were,  
you would not be guilty,  
but since you say, "We see",  
your guilt remains.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A

### Notes

*If you have catechumens preparing for baptism, the 2nd Scrutiny may be celebrated today, in which case, the readings for Fourth Sunday Year A are used.*

In the first reading, David anointed by Samuel as king of Israel, and in the Gospel, Jesus proclaiming 'I am the light of the world', and anointing the Man Born Blind, with a paste on his eyes, and asking him to go and wash in the pool at Siloam, and is then able to see. There follows a wonderful scene. On being questioned by the Pharisees about Jesus, the formerly blind man says 'I don't know if he is a sinner; I only know that I was blind and now I can see... I have told you once, and you wouldn't listen... now here is an astonishing thing! He has opened my eyes, and you don't know where he comes from!... if this man were not from God he couldn't do a thing!' The Pharisees drove the blind man away, and then Jesus sought him out and asked him 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Tell me who he is, so that I may believe in him.' Jesus replied 'You are looking at him, he is speaking to you,' and the man said 'Lord I believe' and worshipped him.

### Questions for Reflection

If your group session is prior to the Sunday, and the celebration of the 2nd Scrutiny, you may like to spend a little time in preparation. If it is post the celebration, begin your time together listening to stories of their experience of the scrutiny, and those from the parish community too.

- What strikes you about the first reading, the choosing of David, the youngest son and shepherd boy?
- In the Gospel, what strikes you about the man born blind, and his response to the Pharisees? And the fact that Jesus seeks him out? And his response to Jesus?
- What is it like, do you think, to be 'blind' physically, or spiritually?
- What does the image of light and darkness mean for you?
- On your own journey in faith, can you identify an 'astonishing' moment or moments when 'the light' came in, pushing 'the darkness' out?

The psalm for this Sunday, using the Year A readings, is 'The Lord is my shepherd'. Many people may know the traditional 'Crimond' tune for this – you might like to sing this, or another version of the Psalm. If not, to say it prayerfully together in thanksgiving for the light of faith and Christ, the Shepherd, at work in our lives.

### Making connections

Though the introduction to the Period of Purification and Enlightenment stresses that Lent, for the Elect is more for 'interior reflection' rather than 'catechetical instruction' [cf. RCIA 126] the *Homiletic Directory* identifies the following 'resonances' with the Catechism:

CCC 280, 529, 748, 1165, 2466, 2715: *Christ the light of the nations*

CCC 439, 496, 559, 2616: *Jesus is the Son of David*

CCC 1216: *Baptism is illumination*

CCC 782, 1243, 2105: *Christians are to be light of the world*

