

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT



That All Might Be Light

Lord of light,
God of our salvation,
we walk by the light of your Son,
whom you sent that all might see and know
your love.

Manifest yourself to all who seek your face,
and be merciful when we persist
in blindness.

Expose injustice,
and illuminate the way to peace.
Reveal the darkness within and around us.
Cast that darkness out of us
so that we will walk more boldly by
your light.
With your Son as our guide,
bring us into your everlasting radiance.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, March 22, 2020

Into the Light



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.
When Samuel goes to Jesse to anoint a new king, no one, including Samuel, recognizes God's chosen one. Only God is able to look within David and see that this shepherd boy will be a capable and faithful king.

The people in the Gospel passage also struggle to see as God sees, and so do we. Jesus' words and actions provoke everyone to decide whether he is God's chosen one, whether God truly sent him into the world to save it. The challenge then, as now, is to examine the testimony without making assumptions, such as assuming Jesus was wrong to heal on the Sabbath or that blindness is a punishment for sin.

As we scrutinize Jesus, asking ourselves who he is, we face the ultimate challenge of moving toward or away from him, of moving toward or away from God's light. We want to stand within this light, but sometimes the brightness frightens us. God's light exposes our darkness, and it can hurt when God's light burns the darkness out of us. Sometimes it is easier to close our eyes and pretend that we already see everything clearly.

But we cannot escape God's light. It has come into the world, and it remains in our midst. It remains in us. This light will make us radiate with joy and goodness and enable us to illuminate the way for others if we are humble and brave enough to let it.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, March 23

Making Everything New

Passages such as the one from Isaiah in the First Reading remind us how invested God is in this earth. Having created the world, God will not abandon it but will refashion it, casting out suffering and sorrow. By healing a child, Jesus reveals that God's work of re-creation has already begun. God invites us to participate in it. Reflect on how the work you do—or could do—is part of God's work of remaking the world. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 65:17–21; Psalm 30:2 and 4, 5–6, 11–12a and 13b; John 4:43–54.*

Tuesday, March 24

Replenishing

The prophet Ezekiel tells of a glorious future in which fresh water flows in abundance. The water brings life to parched ground, transforms salty water, and allows fish and fruit trees to thrive. In the Gospel, Jesus surpasses this life-giving water. He ignores the pool and heals the man through the power of his word alone. The man represents all creation transformed and replenished by the power of Christ. Each time you use water today, thank God for the ways he has helped and replenished you. *Today's Readings: Ezekiel 47:1–9, 12; Psalm 46:2–3, 5–6, 8–9; John 5:1–16.*

Wednesday, March 25

Solemnity of the Annunciation

In the Old Testament, sacrifices are offerings set apart for God. Such gifts remind the people that they themselves are set apart for God. We give things up during Lent in order to make ourselves a sacrifice, to set ourselves apart from the things of this world and to put ourselves at the service of God and his kingdom. King Ahaz did not want to become such an offering, whereas Mary offered herself with barely a moment's thought. Offer yourself to God by praying St. Ignatius of Loyola's *Suscipe*. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 7:10–14; 8:10; Psalm 40:7–8a, 8b–9, 10, 11; Hebrews 10:4–10; Luke 1:26–38.*

Thursday, March 26

The Faces of God

The Israelites in the reading from Exodus wanted to relate to God in ways that were familiar to them, so they made an image of God. They struggled to accept that God is both beyond images and represented by them, his people. Centuries later God again presented himself in a way that was hard for people to accept: in Jesus, his Son. Make a list of titles for Jesus. Choose one you do not normally use and reflect on what it reveals about God. *Today's Readings: Exodus 32:7–14; Psalm 106:19–20, 21–22, 23; John 5:31–47.*

Friday, March 27

The Just Ones

People in the temple area question whether Jesus is the Messiah because they know he is from Galilee. They struggle to accept that he is somehow from God, “from above.” Others flatly refuse to believe that Jesus has a unique relationship with God. Jesus is the just man, the one who obeys God in everything, yet who is attacked for precisely that reason. Take a moment to pray for those who are ridiculed or endangered because they are doing what is right. *Today's Readings: Wisdom 2:1a, 12–22; Psalm 34:17–18, 19–20, 21 and 23; John 7:1–2, 10, 25–30.*

Saturday, March 28

Rejections

As Jesus continues to provoke division, the religious authorities take an ever more rigid stance against him. They so insist that they know the law, that they know the Scriptures, that they demean everyone who doesn't agree with them. God's prophet Jeremiah also experienced spite and dangerous rejection. In those moments we reject someone, it may turn out that we have misunderstood what God is telling us. Choose a psalm and listen for how God might be challenging you. *Today's Readings: Jeremiah 11:18–20; Psalm 7:2–3, 9bc–10, 11–12; John 7:40–53.*

