

# **CELEBRATE SABBATH**

## **Fourth Sunday of Lent**

**Give thanks to the God of heaven, for his steadfast love endures forever.**

(Psalm 136:26)

### **1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13**

Samuel went through a very difficult process of choosing someone to succeed Saul as king. He went through a series of prayerful discernment with great fear and doubt. Finally, in Bethlehem, he found David as the man whom God had chosen to be king over his people and anointed him. Both David and his birthplace Bethlehem occupy a special place in the history of salvation.

**God chose Bethlehem, a place of no significance and David, a man of no significance to fulfill his purpose. Man judges by appearance, but God sees the heart. Be open and surrender to God's choice. Prayerfully discern God's plan for you.**

### **Psalm 23**

David had been a shepherd and he knew how to care for the sheep and what it cost him. He became shepherd of his people. He had to figure out how he should care for them. He knew the sheep well and now he must come to know his people, their ways, their needs and their concerns. This problem gave him a new awareness of what God, the true shepherd, is like in his relationship to his people.

Like shepherd....God knows his people just as they are in all their need, in their stubbornness and stupidity as well as in their value and worth. Like a shepherd...God reaches out, searches out the lost and keeps them safe. Like a shepherd....God provides food, drink, safety, light in darkness, Grace, comfort and strength in "dark valley moments". This Psalm proclaims the enduring, steadfast, loyal, unconquerable love of God, the good shepherd, who will never let us slip out of his hands!

**The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
In verdant pastures he gives me repose,  
Beside restful waters he leads me,  
He refreshes my soul.**

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

Paul challenged Ephesians to live as children of light because they are light in the Lord. Those who were in darkness once have come into the light of Christ. Paul says, light produces

benevolence, righteousness and truth. Children of light must cultivate generosity of spirit, work for justice for all and live in truth. Just as Jesus was a light to other nations, the light that revealed justice and peace through Israel, today the world must experience justice and peace of God through us and our church and our church institutions.

You are the light of the world..... your light must shine before men so that they may see goodness in your acts and give praise to your heavenly Father (Mathew 5:14-16).

Light makes things visible, gives us warmth, brings us comfort and makes us feel safe!

**Reflect on what it means for you to be children of light, to be light for others!**

### **John 9:1-38**

In this excerpt, we read the story of the blind beggar, who went, washed as Jesus told him to and was able to see. Jesus spat on the ground, made mud paste with his saliva and smeared the man's eyes with the mud paste and asked him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam.

**Something of Jesus and something of the earth made all the difference. He came to believe in Jesus. Belief in Jesus made the difference, and his life was never the same.**

*The San Francisco Examiner* once reported that a blind man, who had been hired to work in a bank under a special government-funded jobs program, was leaving the bank one day when he tripped over his seeing-eye dog and fell down the steps. Miraculously, the fall and a sharp blow to the man's head restored his sight. His joy was short-lived. Because he could now see, he no longer qualified for the jobs program and was fired from his position at the bank.

The man born blind enters the paradox of meeting Jesus, receiving his sight, then being expelled from the Synagogue. He was once a skillful beggar, self-sufficient, well positioned at a prime spot right next to the pool of Siloam. Now he could see and therefore he is faced with finding a job for the first time in his life.....and out of the Synagogue!

**What a journey! A nameless blind man moves from blindness through mud paste, through the cleansing pool to a new vision of himself and out the Synagogue to new life, to new risks, to new challenges! Knowing Jesus meant salvation for the blind beggar, but at great cost to himself.**

**Knowing Jesus means life-changing conversion for all of us. Be alert! Be awake! Be ready!**

**Reflect and pray.....**

- **How often judgments are made from appearance? Reflect on the need to look beyond appearance? Search for the real.**

- **What does it mean to live as children of light?**
- **What do you need to wash so that you may have a clearer vision?**
- **Have you found a new vision in Jesus?**
- **“the blind man washed and was able to see” - what does this mean in terms of your personal life?**
- **What area of your life need to be touched by Jesus?**

**Saint of the Day, March 19 - Saint Joseph and 8 other saints are remembered this day.**

We know very little about Joseph, the husband of Mary. New Testament writings tell us that Joseph was born into the lineage of David. Matthew’s Gospel describes Joseph as a “just man.” In Biblical times, one of the most beautiful compliments one person could give to another was to call him or her “tzaddik,” a person of justice and virtue. Joseph was a man who followed his dreams and visions. He listened to the angel asking him not to be afraid to take Mary home as his wife and listened again to the Angel asking him to take the child Jesus to safety and protect him from Herod. He was a just and virtuous man and he followed his dreams faithfully. He faced many challenges and responsibilities, and he handled them with unfailing courage. We do not have any reliable information about the death of Joseph.

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