

CELEBRATE SABBATH

Fourth Sunday of Lent

**In silence, solitude, stillness and serenity,
God's word can reach the hidden corners of our hearts.**

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 15 - St. Louise de Marillac and 11 other saints are remembered this day.

St. Louise de Marillac was born on August 12, 1591, at Le Meux in France. As a young woman, Louise married a man with a bright future ahead of him. They were both happy in the marriage, but soon her husband developed a chronic illness which worsened over time. After several years, he died.

In 1625, Louise moved to a parish near Paris, and Father Vincent de Paul became her spiritual advisor. As their relationship continued, he realized that Louise could be very helpful in directing his Ladies of Charity who cared for the sick, poor and neglected in his parish community. Louise trained his volunteers and organized their work.

In 1634 Father Vincent and Louise co-founded the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. Louise herself professed vows and became Mother Superior. Many women joined her. Mother Louise traveled all over France, placing her sisters in hospitals, orphanages, and other institutions. She encouraged her sisters to treat the poor as if they were serving Christ himself. When she died in 1660, she had established 40 convents. Today, the Sisters of Charity can be found all over the world. St. Louise de Marillac was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1934.

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