

4th Sunday of Lent A

First Reading 1 Samuel 16:1.6-7.10-13

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 this is 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.

Second Reading Ephesians 5:8-14

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.

Gospel John 9:1.6-9.13-17.34-38

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. 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."

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. "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.

Meditation

"I came into this world to divide it, to make the sightless see and the seeing blind" (John 9:39).

The parables of Jesus propose the paradox of a faith perceived by the simple and disregarded by the wise. Under the gaze of Christ, the light of the world, people choose either for or against him.

Some pretend to see and know him. But they keep to their limited views, and it is by the measure of their narrow wisdom that they gauge the works of the divine envoy. If they refuse to believe in him, they can base their case only upon the blindness of their hearts: "We have no idea where this man comes from" (John 9:29). The healed blind man knows only one thing: the man who opened his eyes must come from God. For him and for us, all of life depends upon this humble certitude.

In spite of opposition, the newly sighted must look beyond the man and the prophet to the Son of God and the Lord. Only the totally free initiative of Jesus will allow this personal vision of faith: "You have seen him; he is speaking to you now" (John 9:37). Through baptism the sinner is reborn

from native darkness to the light of Christ. He must learn to see all things anew through the eyes of faith. Thus the whole Christian life is catechumenal: a slow climb through the shifting visions of this world, from the light received and imperfectly seen up to the total clarity of the day of Christ.