

# Sunday, March 22, 2020

## 4th Sunday of Lent

### Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

#### Mass Readings:

1st Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13

2nd Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

Responsorial: Psalm 23:1-6

Gospel: John 9:1-41

## Seeing Others as Jesus Sees them

*If you were blind, you would have no sin. (John 9:41)*

How's your eyesight? What do you see when you look at the world around you? That seems to be the issue in today's Gospel. As the story opens, we meet a man whom everyone assumes is a sinner because he is blind (John 9:2). But by the end of the story, Jesus says that those who claim they can see are really the ones in darkness.

What did these Pharisees claim to see in this man? A sinner—both because he had been blind and because he dared to challenge their authority. And what they saw moved them to berate him and throw him out of the synagogue.

A similar thing happened when they saw Jesus. Because he had performed a healing on the Sabbath, they saw him as another sinner. No one who was righteous would dare break the Law of Moses! Again, what they saw moved them to persecute him all the more.

But what did Jesus see in the blind man? Not a "sinner" to be condemned and expelled, but a child of God in need of healing and salvation. And what he saw moved him to act with mercy.

And what did the blind man see in Jesus? Not a "sinner" who broke the Sabbath, but the Messiah who brings freedom and restoration. And what he saw moved him to bow down in worship.

So let's ask again: how is your eyesight?

Jesus wants to help us see the world as he does. He wants us to see people not as sinners under God's judgment but as brothers and sisters who are offered the same mercy we have received. He wants us to withhold our own judgment and show kindness instead. Because that's how Jesus sees people. It's how he sees you.

So as you gaze at the crucifix and at the Host at Mass today, let Jesus' loving gaze pierce your heart. Let him heal your blindness so that you can see the world through his eyes.

*"Jesus, open my eyes! Help me to see as you see."*

(Many thanks to *The Word Among Us* ([www.wau.org](http://www.wau.org)) for allowing us to use meditations from their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission.)

## Sunday, March 22, 2020

### Questions for Reflection or Discussion:

1. The first reading opens with these words of the Lord to Samuel: *I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen my king from among his sons.* The Lord then speaks these words to Samuel: *Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the LORD looks into the heart.* Finally, when David is brought to Samuel, the Lord speaks these words: *“There—anooint him, for this is the one!” Then Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed David in the presence of his brothers; and from that day on, the spirit of the LORD rushed upon David.*
  - What do you think the words mean that the Lord spoke to Samuel regarding Jesse’s son, Eliab?
  - What impact do you think these words had on Samuel’s decision to anoint David, the youngest of Jesse’s sons?
  - In what ways do these words apply to us in our own decision making?
  - What specific steps can you take to adopt a more godly perspective in judging others?
2. The responsorial psalm, Psalm 23, begins with these familiar words: *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.* It closes with these uplifting words: *Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come.*
  - What do you think the psalmist meant when he said, *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want?*
  - What do the words: *he refreshes my soul* mean to you? Have there been times in your life when you have actually experienced the Lord’s refreshment? How?
  - How important to you are the closing words of the psalm, especially during difficult times in your life?
3. The second reading opens with these words: *You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth.* It continues with these words: *Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them, for it is shameful even to mention the things done by them in secret; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light.*
  - What is St. Paul trying to describe in the opening words by contrasting the Ephesians’ previous condition of *darkness* with their current condition of *light in the Lord*? How do these words apply to us?
  - What do you think was the meaning of St. Paul’s continuing advice to *Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them?*
  - Do you believe that the best place to expose the *fruitless works of darkness* so that *Christ will give you light* is in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Why is this so?
4. The Gospel reading contains the reaction of many people to Jesus’ encounter with the blind man, and his healing him of blindness. This includes Jesus’ disciples, the blind man’s neighbors, the Pharisees, and the blind man’s parents. Notice that the man healed of blindness goes from saying, *The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes* to saying, *He is a prophet* and then, *If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything* to finally, *I do believe, Lord, and then he worshiped him.*
  - How do the various reactions to the blind man’s healing describe the different ways people respond when they encounter Jesus? Which of the many different people in this story do you identify with?
  - In what way is the Gospel story, in addition to being a story of a miraculous healing of a blind man, also a story of his conversion to Christ, including the healing of his spiritual blindness?
  - How does this story of the blind man apply to your journey of conversion and encountering Christ?
5. The meditation ends with these words: *“Jesus wants to help us see the world as he does. He wants us to see people not as sinners under God’s judgment but as brothers and sisters who are offered the same mercy we have received. He wants us to withhold our own judgment and show kindness instead. Because that’s how Jesus sees people. It’s how he sees you. So as you gaze at the crucifix and at the Host at Mass, let Jesus’ loving gaze pierce your heart. Let him heal your blindness so that you can see the world through his eyes.”*
  - These words speak of Jesus’ desire to heal people of spiritual blindness. Even though we may not be physically blind, in what ways do we all face a certain degree of spiritual blindness because of our fallen nature?
  - What areas of spiritual blindness do you want Jesus to heal in you, so that you can “see” more clearly in those areas? What steps can you take in the remaining days of Lent, to open yourself to this healing?

**Take some time now to ask the Lord to enliven your faith and trust in him and to continue his healing of any spiritual blindness you may have. Use the prayer from the end of the meditation as a starting point.**

***“Jesus, open my eyes! Help me to see as you see.”***

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is currently a member of the board of directors of the ChristLife Catholic Ministry for Evangelization ([www.christlife.org](http://www.christlife.org)), a member of the National Service Committee Council of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal ([www.nsc-chariscenter.org](http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org)), and a board member of The Love of Christ Foundation. Prior to this, Maurice was the founding executive director of the National fellowship of Catholic Men, a chairman of the board of *The Word Among Us* ([www.wau.org](http://www.wau.org)), and a director of partner relations for The Word Among Us Partners ministry. He can be contacted at [mblumberg@wau.org](mailto:mblumberg@wau.org) or [mblumberg@aol.com](mailto:mblumberg@aol.com).]