

The Work of the People
The Fourth Sunday of Lent

The Gospels of weeks 3,4 and 5 give us insight into who this Jesus, with whom we will walk through the difficulties of Holy Week, really is, the Suffering Servant of God. These Gospels also give us a clue as to how we are called to respond to the grace and mercy of God as it comes to us through Jesus.

In the reading from the first Book of Samuel, the selection and anointing of David as the king of the Israelites initiates a new era in the history of the people of God. It is clear from the account that God is the one who makes the decision, a choice that is not based on the normal criteria. Once again, the ways of the Lord are not the ways of human beings. Despite his humble beginnings, the Spirit of the Lord will guide David and he will establish a great nation. The house of David will be renowned; in future generations another Shepherd will spring from the root of Jesse, of the family of David.

In Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, the contrast of darkness and light is one of several such contrasts that occur in the Lenten Scriptures. Others include temptation and transformation; thirst and overflowing water; fasting and feasting; blindness and sight; death and new life. Paul reminds the Ephesians that they once lived in darkness, a spiritual state before their faith in Jesus Christ, but now they live in the light. The Easter imagery here is obvious and it serves to prepare both the elect and the baptized to hurry toward the celebration of Christ, the Light of the world.

In today's Gospel selection from John the contrast of darkness and light underscores both healing of the blind man and the teaching of Jesus about who is spiritually blind and who can truly see. The encounter between Jesus and the man born blind confronts the religious thinking of the crowds and the religious leaders. It becomes a vehicle for Jesus to expose them to the intervention of God in human affairs and to see if their faith is ready to accept him. When the man regains his sight, he professes his belief in the "Son of Man". Like the Samaritan woman, this man becomes the bearer of Good News, if only the others can see it.

The reflection for this Sunday is from Mary Stommes who is editor of *Give Us This Day*.

I was blind, but now I see. Amazing.

Amazing grace, though? Was this really an encounter with God?

Not everyone sees it that way. According to some who know a lot about the things of God, this certainly is not God's doing. "This man, Jesus, is not from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath. . . . We know that this man is a sinner." Think about it. A community of faith so faithful to the rules that even the Son of God is seen as an unwelcome sinner. Sigh. Another day in the life of the Son of God.

Another day, another miracle. Another controversy. In the heat of it, we might forget how this all began: "As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth." He saw not a sinner, not a child of sinners, but a beloved child of God, a disciple-in-the-making. Amazing Grace, how sweet his sight.

And sweeter his healing. Short and sweet, just a two-sentence miracle. Good of Jesus to make quick work of it, as often as the man will have to retell the story. But why does a story so short and sweet generate so many questions and so much division? Grace has its reasons. Thrust back into community, into the noisy bickering about the meaning of his restored sight, the man gradually sees his encounter with Jesus for what it is: "a work of God being made visible through him." The more he tells the story and wrestles with the questions, the more his spiritual insight develops. It's the story within the story.

The man tells of his healing once and ends with, "I don't know."

He tells the story again and ends with, "He is a prophet." By the time he tells it again, he is teaching the teachers: "This is what is so amazing, that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes." As if to say, "If Jesus were not from God, I wouldn't be standing eye-to-eye with you, telling you what I now know and see." Call that chutzpah or call it grace, it drives the teachers to fury. High time to reinforce the no-sinners-allowed rule. They throw him out.

No surprise that Jesus heard all about it. He hears as well as he sees. And no surprise that Jesus makes the effort to find him. There's a question on his mind, a question he's dying to ask every disciple.

Do you believe? Do you believe I am the love of God made visible? Do you believe my love is at work in every human being?

Yes, Lord, I do believe.

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: 2 Sm. 7:4-5a, 12-14a, 16/Rom. 4:13, 16-18, 22
 Mt. 1:16, 18-21, 24a or Lk. 2:41-51a
 Tuesday: Ez. 47:1-9, 12/Jn. 5:1-16
 Wednesday: Is. 49:8-15/Jn. 5:17-30
 Thursday: Ex. 32:7-14/Jn. 5:31-47
 Friday: Wis. 2:1a, 12-22/Jn. 7:1-2, 10, 25-30
 Saturday: Is. 7:10-14, 8:10/Heb. 10:4-10/ Lk. 1:26-38
 Sunday: Ez. 37:12-14/Rom 8:8-11/Jn. 11:1-45
 or 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45

*"St. Joseph,
 watchful guardian of the Holy Family,
 teach me to live in unwavering hope!"*

WORSHIP

Monday, March 20
 8:00 am + Leo Wronko (Joan Rembielak)
 Tuesday, March 21
 8:00 am + Emil Semrad (Barb Milligan)
 Wednesday, March 22
 8:00 am + NO MASS
 Thursday, March 23
 8:00 am + Liv. & Dec. Members of PNA Lodge 1540
 Friday, March 24
 8:00 am + Ron Yusavage (Kathleen Lipkovich)
 Saturday, March 25
 4:30 pm + Joanne Mazzotta (Rose Miller)
 Sunday, March 26
 8:00 am + AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 Richard Baker (Pauline Baker)
 9:30 am + AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
 Living & Deceased Parishioners

PARISH EVENTS CALENDAR

Sunday, March 19
 After Mass - Faith Formation Class
 Monday, March 20
 5:00 pm - Doors open for BINGO
 Tuesday, March 21 - AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
 After Mass - St. Anthony Novena
 5:00 pm - Lenten Confession
 6:00 pm - Benediction & Stations of the Cross
 Saturday, March 25
 3:30 - 4:15 pm - Confession
 Sunday, March 26
 AT ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 Before Mass - Confession
 AT ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
 After Mass - Confession

**ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
 ALTAR SERVERS**

Saturday, Mar. 25 - 4:30 pm
 Payton Leandro
 Sunday, Mar. 26 - 9:30 am
 Max Marteeny

**CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS COMMUNITY
 EASTER EGG HUNT**

Held at the Cambridge Springs Carnival Grounds on Saturday, April 1st starting at 1 pm. Egg hunt, prizes, games, balloon animals. FREE EVENT for children ages 1 - 12.

**ST. BERNADETTE MISSION
 STEWARDSHIP**

Offertory	\$844.00
Candles	15.00
TOTAL	\$859.00

LENTEN DEVOTIONS

Stations of the Cross, Benediction, and Confession

St. Anthony of Padua
 Tues. Mar. 21 - 5:00 pm (Confessions)
 6:00 pm (Stations of the Cross/ Benediction)
 Tues. Mar. 28 - 6:00 pm (Stations of the Cross only)
 Fri. Mar. 31 - 4:00 pm (Confessions)
 Tues. Apr. 4 - 6:00 pm (Stations of the Cross/Benediction)

St Bernadette Mission
 Tues. Mar. 28 - 5:00 pm (Confession)
 6:00 pm (Stations of the Cross/Benediction)

**CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS MINISTERIUM
 LENTEN SERVICE & LUNCHEONS**

March 22 - First United Methodist
 April 5 - St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Lenten Services & Luncheons begin at Noon

**SAEGERTOWN COMMUNITY
 LENTEN LUNCHEONS**

March 22 - Twelve Apostles Lutheran Church
 March 29 - St. Bernadette Mission

Every Wednesday during Lent at 12:00 Noon

CAMP NOTRE DAME

Attention college students and 2023 high school graduates:

Are you looking for the best summer job of your life? Do you love working with children? Are you willing to share your faith? Camp Notre Dame, a youth camp associated with the Diocese of Erie, may be the place for you. If you are interested in a counselor position, then please visit the Camp Notre Dame Web Site at www.campnotredame.com and click on the employment link.

EIGHT ANNUAL CATHOLIC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Saturday, March 25, 2023
 St. Jude Parish, Erie, PA
 8:00 am - 12:30 pm
 Speaker: Laurel Phelps
 Mass with Bishop Persico
 Fee is \$20, College Students \$10, H.S. Students \$5
 For more information or to register visit:
www.1:38women.com or call 814 455-7364

**ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA
 STEWARDSHIP**

Offertory	\$1,163.00
Maintenance	332.00
Candles	30.00
Altar Flowers	10.00
TOTAL	\$1,535.00

Catholic Services Appeal
 Pledged: \$25,913.33 Paid: \$15,043.33

CHURCH NAME: ST. ANTONY OF PADUA

CHURCH NO.:

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:
