



Christ in Our Neighborhood

March 19, 2023

Prayer

Father of peace, we are joyful in your Word, your Son Jesus Christ, who reconciles us to You. Let us hasten toward Easter with the eagerness of faith and love. Grant this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Commentary

2nd Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

As the days become a little longer and the sun warms the Earth, our calendars do not need to confirm what our senses already tell us. Spring has arrived and we see signs of it all around us.

Commentary

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

Our readings this weekend invite us to see with God's eyes. The Book of Samuel challenges us to step outside of the obvious and ordinary way of seeing and to use our eyes of faith.

Using our eyes of faith allows us to see as God sees.

How does God see? God does not give value to our appearance, our age, or stature in life. Instead, God values our hearts and souls.

As our reading reminds us: "Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart." If we use only our natural senses to handle life's issues, we will never escape the trap of this world. Instead, this Lent invites us to take the extraordinary step into Christ's world and see our world from His perspective.

This requires a conversion of the heart.

Question

What issue in my life today needs to be examined from God's perspective?

4th Sunday of Lent

If spring has come and winter is behind us, we turn off our heat, open the windows, and let the warm breezes fill our home.

In a similar way, our 2nd Reading from Paul to the Ephesians reminds us to live as children of the light and not in darkness. The light of faith in Christ Jesus warms our spiritual hearts and calls us out of our spiritual hibernation.

We are told, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

Why continue to live in the cold darkness of our sins, when Christ our Light can warm our souls?

This Season of Lent invites us to see with God's eyes that we are no longer in darkness. Instead, we live in Christ our Light!

Question

What steps am I taking this Lent to remain in the Light of Christ?

The commentaries over these 6 weeks of Lent are presented by Bishop John Dolan of the Diocese of Phoenix.

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Commentary

Gospel: John 9:1-41

Our Gospel today reminds us that there are three ways of seeing. When the man who was born blind is healed by Jesus, he receives “natural” sight. What a miracle!

However, a second miracle occurs as this man is able to proclaim that Jesus is a prophet.

Normally, the world “prophet” would be an extraordinary title for anyone in Jesus’ time.

A prophet was one who was favored by God with wisdom. The healed man not only received physical sight, but “insight” to recognize that Jesus was an extraordinary person.

A third form of seeing occurs in the Gospel where the man is approached by Jesus again. This time, the man sees that Jesus is more than a prophet. He sees that Jesus is Lord and he worships Him.

Lest we forget, the Season of Lent invites us to see that Jesus is Lord and God of our lives. He is more than a miracle worker. He is more than a prophet with wisdom. He is the God of our lives!

Question

The man worshiped Jesus as Lord. In what way do I worship Jesus?

This Week’s Task

This week, make an attempt to be a light for someone who is living in darkness. Consider:

- reaching out to a homebound person
- writing a letter to a person who could use comfort
- inviting a person to lunch or dinner

Group Prayer

The group leader invites the group to say the following prayer: A lighted candle may be placed on a table as the group prays this Breastplate of Saint Patrick.

Christ, as a light illumine & guide us.
Christ as a shield overshadow & cover us.
Christ be under us, Christ be over us.
Christ be beside us, on left & on right.
Christ be before us, behind us, about us.
Christ, this day, be within and without us.

The leader will then guide the group in praying Psalm 23 (from the 4th Sunday of Lent).

Psalm

Psalm Response: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

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.

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side
With your rod and your staff that give me courage.

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

You spread the table before me in the sight of my foes; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

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.

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Conclude with an OUR FATHER