

BIBLE STUDY
March 13, 2023

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

1 Samuel 16: 1b, 6-7, 10-13a

John 9: 1-41

Ephesians 5: 8-14

1. The three Gospels of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent reflect the journey of faith that all Christians embark upon and especially the members of the community that that will be baptized, confirmed, and receive the Eucharist at this coming Easter. During these Sundays, we pray with them in the Scrutinies that God will lead them on this journey of conversion. Rev. Demetrius Dumm, author of *A Mystical Portrait of Jesus*, has identified the Samaritan Woman at the Well with Baptism and this story of the Man Born Blind with the enlightenment that comes from Jesus the Light of the World as we progress in our deepening and personalizing our relationship with Jesus.
2. **1 Samuel 16: 1b, 6-7, 10-13a**
 - God does not judge by appearances but by the heart. He does not choose the seven older sons of Jesse, but he chooses the youngest, David, a shepherd.
 - When David is anointed, from that day on, the Spirit rushes upon him.
3. **John 9: 1-41**
 - In John 8:12, Jesus proclaims himself, The Light of the World, a light that he wishes to share with all men and women. The story of the Man Born Blind illustrates how Jesus shares his Light with believers.
 - 9: 1-7: Upon seeing the man who has been blind from birth, a discussion arises about why he is blind. Is he blind because of his sin or the sin of his parents? This is a pointless discussion for Jesus. The focus is on present action. God wishes to heal and give sight to this man right here and now.
 - Jesus makes clay out of his saliva and the dirt, just as Adam was created from the dust of the earth. This manner of his healing signifies that it is a new creation. The blind man is being created anew in Baptism by the water of the pool of Siloam, which means “sent”—Jesus is the one who has been sent.
 - 9: 8-12: There is such a transformation of the man that his neighbors doubt that he is the same man. The man once blind testifies that it is he and that he has been healed by “the man called Jesus.” Jesus is still just a man to him and he does not know where he is.
 - 9: 13-17: Now, the Pharisees get involved. They take issue that Jesus healed him on the Sabbath when no work can be done. They say Jesus is sinful because he does not observe the Sabbath. The man once blind sticks to his testimony that he can see because Jesus washed his eyes.

He now goes further and says that Jesus is a Prophet. He is advancing in his journey of enlightenment.

- 9: 18-23: The Pharisees, maybe looking for a way out, call the man's parents and ask them what they think. They say that the man is an adult and can speak for himself. The process of enlightenment make us go beyond what we have learned about Jesus from parents, what we know as a child, and to explore who Jesus is for us as adults.
- 9: 24-34: The Pharisees question the man once blind again. He sticks to the testimony of his experience; he was blind and now he sees. He challenges the Pharisees to look at the evidence: how can an evil person do a good deed of God. The man is firm in his new found enlightenment that Jesus is from God. He is thrown out of the synagogue for his belief.
- 9: 35-39: Jesus searches for the man once blind and finds him like the Good Shepherd that he is. As Light of the World, he elicits from the man a profession of faith in him as Lord. This leads him to worship Jesus as Son of man and Son of God.
- 9: 40-41: The story concludes with Jesus pointing out the blindness of the Pharisees. As the man born blind progresses from physical blindness to physical sight and the spiritual sight, the Pharisees descend from spiritual sight to spiritual blindness.
- The story is asking us to reflect on our journey of faith and to see how we are being illumined by Christ.

4. Ephesians 5: 8-14

- Paul continues the imagery of light and darkness. To be in darkness is to live in sin. To walk in the light is to follow the Law of the Lord—which is the law of love.
- Paul urges the Ephesians and us to embrace the light and to do the deeds of light which are every kind of goodness and righteousness. We are to reject the darkness. Darkness covers up shameful, sinful deeds. The light exposes them and purifies them.