

The Fourth Sunday of Lent/Laetare Sunday/  
Year A – 25/27 March 2017 –  
(Coffee/Donuts after Sunday Masses; Area Parishes Communal  
Reconciliation Celebration – Sunday – 4:00 PM)  
Our Lady of Victory Parish Community –  
HOMILY

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:**

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

- “But the Lord said to Samuel: “Do not judge from his appearance of from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart.” . . . Then Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed David . . . and from that day on, the spirit of the Lord rushed upon David.”

**Responsorial Psalm:**

Psalm 23 - *Sung*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:**

Ephesians 5:8-14

- “Brothers and sisters: You were once darkness, but now you are light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; . . . everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. . . . “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.” “

**GOSPEL:**

**JOHN 9:1-41**  
**(Long Form)**

- “As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. . . . he spat on the ground . . . smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, “Go wash in the Pool of Siloam – which means Sent. So he went and washed, and came back able to see. . . . His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, “Isn’t this the one . . . Some . . . “It is” . . . others. . . , “No” . . . . He said, “I am.” . . . So they said to the blind man . . . “What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.” . . . They answered and said to him, “You were born totally in sin and are you

trying to teach us?" Then they threw him out. When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered . . . "Who is he . . . that I may believe . . . " Jesus said . . . , "You have seen him, the one speaking with you is he." He said, "I do believe, Lord," and he worshiped him."

- *Similarities to last week (Samaritan woman at the well) . . .*
- *Continuing dialogue (question, answer, question, answer . . . much like a court proceeding) . . .*
- *Both the Samaritan woman and the man born blind id Jesus as a Prophet*
- *Dialogue ultimately leads to both asking Jesus for something – woman – for water so that she may not thirst again and have to keep coming back to the well . . . man born blind, to id the Son of Man so that he might believe in him . . .*
- *Jesus responds to both, identifying himself as the "living water" and the "Son of Man" . . . and both make a profession of faith in him . . .*
- *Jacob (encounter with the Samaritan woman was at Jacob's well), one of 3 Patriarchs of Israel – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob –*
- *Jacob named Israel*
- *Moses mentioned this week (man born blind) . . .*
- *Both think Jesus is a Prophet*
- *John sees Jesus as completing what the Patriarchs, the Law and the Prophets began and pointed to . . . Jesus is the "new" Israel . . . but the one who will ultimately be the Passover and lead believers out from their Exodus . . .*

i. For those who were hoping for something with “props” this weekend . . . well . . . I’ll touch on that a bit later . . .

First, we need to get to the heart of what’s going on with these Scriptures this weekend . . . in particular the Gospel passage . . .

There is an **easy** “Homily” here . . . Jesus, again, in a risky encounter on a variety of levels, comes upon a man born blind . . . there’s conversation with the man . . . his disciples . . . others . . . Jesus restores his sight . . . at one point . . . the man, who’s sight is restored, tells the Pharisees that Jesus is a prophet . . . much like the Samaritan woman as well . . . and there’s still lots and lots of “**buzz**” . . . among the Pharisees . . . among the Jews in that town and village . . . all sorts of folks offering their thoughts and opinions . . . and of course the ole’, “Blindness is the result of someone’s sin” belief back in that day . . . in other words . . . tick God off and God will visit you with a plague . . . which, as we know . . . Jesus strongly dispels . . . and ultimately, this whole encounter ends with this blind beggar professing belief in Jesus as the Son of Man . . . while everybody else is still arguing and defending their turf . . . setting up the next scene

in this whole drama, if you will . . . the intensifying rift between Jesus and the Jewish authorities of the day . . .

Add to this, the first reading from the First Book of Samuel . . . and throw in a bit of the second reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians, and we have a simple Homily that reminds us of how important it is for us to **see** as God **sees** and, with the light that Christ gives to us . . . we can **see** clearly all we **should** see . . . and we, too, will ultimately recognize Christ as the “Son of Man” . . . done . . . finished . . . sit down . . . and all done without any props or show and tell . . . unless you want to consider that I still have my glasses on without which I could not see much of what may be written on these sheets!!!

But, that really is a bit too simple . . .

ii. Michael Simone, a Jesuit assistant professor of Scripture at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, in an article he wrote, notes:

[The Evangelist] “John did not include this story in his Gospel to warn us about the blindness of the Pharisees, although it is true that, in this instance, they did not see. John wrote this Gospel to show how easy it is for any of **us** to lose sight of Jesus, even when he works openly.”

I’m certain there may be those of us present who are already formulating our protests and saying in our heads, “Not me! I would never lose sight of Jesus!”

iii. Lest we protest too much . . . let’s be honest with ourselves . . . for each and every one of us . . . at times . . . maybe more often than we would want to admit . . . each and every one of us **DOES** “lose sight of Jesus!”

We lose sight of Jesus when we become entrenched in our own self-righteousness . . . when we are convinced that whatever time we are **willing** to give to Jesus . . . or worse yet, whatever time we have **allotted** for Jesus, is not simply sufficient, but should be more than enough for our own spiritual being . . . When we lose sight of giving to Jesus . . . our time . . . our heart . . . our mind . . . our worship . . . our **all** . . . when, our lack of trust in the Lord and His

call to us and to others so paralyzes us that we are afraid to reach out to others and invite them to share what it is He has given us . . . His life-giving . . . life-changing word . . . God's gift of His only Son out of such great love for us . . . their very Spirit to guide us in all ways . . . then, we, like the Pharisees, don't simply **box God in** . . . **restrict God** to acting only in the way we expect . . . but we lose **sight** of the Lord . . . we **do not see** . . . we become blind . . .

We have been given all of the props we need today . . . for once again it is God's Word that fills us . . . that restores our sight . . . setting the eyes of our minds, hearts and souls . . . on the Lord . . . and soon . . . **soon** . . . we will encounter Him in a perfect way . . . Jesus, who is the very life that nourishes and strengthens us . . . Jesus, who helps us to continue the process of day by day . . . bit by bit, of seeing clearly all the He calls us to see . . . all He so desperately wants us to see . . . so that we keep our eyes fixed on Him . . . even in the mostly unlikely of situations!