

## Fourth Sunday of Lent Home Preaching Resources

### **Introduction:**

Fr. Bruce has prepared the following preaching resource in the hopes that it will guide and stimulate discussion at home about the scriptures for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, March 22, 2020. Instant liturgy: add you and stir.

First, since the high point of the Liturgy of the Word is the reading of the Gospel, whatever you do, please read aloud all the Biblical passages assigned to this weekend – the anointing of David from the First Book of Samuel, the always comforting 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, the call for Christians to awake in St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, and then the story of the man born blind from St. John's Gospel. The Gospel is divided into five speaking parts – a Narrator, Reader 1, Reader 2, Jesus and the Blind Man – so several family members could read one or more parts. And if you live alone, you can Facetime or group chat with some Lourdes friends and do the readings together that way.

Second, after you take turns reading through the scriptures and Fr. Bruce's reflections, take some time to discuss the suggested questions or other points that came to mind during the proclamation of the scriptures or the preaching.

Third, begin and finish out with prayer. Some "official" prayers are provided as launch pads for you own. In addition, there's a running start on Prayers of the Faithful for you to add your concerns.

Fourth, we've include some files and hyperlinks to some music that connects to this Sunday's readings. You can even sing along to familiar numbers like the "Our Lady of Lourdes" song we do at the sign of peace.

It's our prayer that this packet will give your hearth and home a holy hour or more, and connect all of us in prayer. Blessings! Fr. Jeffery & Fr. Bruce

Script for Home Liturgy of the Word – March 21 & 22, 2020

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

**May the grace and peace from Christ, the source of our strength and the unity of our families, be with us all.**

### **PENITENTIAL ACT**

Lord Jesus, you healed the man born blind: Lord, have mercy.  
Christ Jesus, you confronted those who did not believe: Christ, have mercy.  
Lord Jesus, you came to give us eyes that truly see: Lord, have mercy.

### **PRELUDE**

As we continue our journey through this season of Lent, we are met with the question of who is worthy in God's eyes. Based on false expectations the Israelites and the Pharisees never thought David would be chosen king or that Jesus would heal the man born blind. Worthiness may be found not in reputation or pedigree or appearance, but in one's heart.

## **Fourth Sunday of Lent**

### **Reading 1**

**A reading from the first Book of Samuel [1 SM 16:1B, 6-7, 10-13A]**

The LORD said to Samuel: "Fill your horn with oil, and be on your way. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen my king from among his sons. As Jesse and his sons came to the sacrifice, Samuel looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is here before him." But the LORD said to Samuel: "Do not judge from his appearance or 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."

In the same way Jesse presented seven sons before Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any one of these." Then Samuel asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" Jesse replied, "There is still the youngest, who is tending the sheep." Samuel said to Jesse, "Send

for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until he arrives here.”

Jesse sent and had the young man brought to them. He was ruddy, a youth handsome to behold and making a splendid appearance. The LORD said, “There—anoint 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.

**Responsorial Psalm *Twenty-third Psalm* [PS 23: 1-3A, 3B-4, 5, 6].**

**R. (1) The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. Beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul.

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

He guides me in right paths for his name’s sake. 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.

**R. 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.

**R. 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.

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

**Reading 2**

**A reading from St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians [EPH 5:8-14]**

Brothers and sisters: 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.

Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. 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.

Therefore, it says: “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

## Verse Before The Gospel

### JN 8:12

I am the light of the world, says the Lord;  
whoever follows me will have the light of life.

## Gospel

### A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John [JN 9:1-41]

**Narrator:** As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him,

**Reader 1:** “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

**Narrator:** Jesus answered,

**Jesus:** “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and 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.

**Narrator:** His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said,

**Reader 1:** “Isn’t this the one who used to sit and beg?” Some said, “It is,” but others said, “No, he just looks like him.”

**Blind Man:** [He said,] “I am.”

**Reader 1:** So they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?”

**Blind Man:** [He replied,] “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went there and washed and was able to see.”

**Reader 1:** And they said to him, “Where is he?”

**Blind Man:** [He said,] “I don’t know.”

**Narrator:** They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees. Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a sabbath. So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see.

**Blind Man:** [He said to them,] “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see.”

**Reader 2:** So some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath.”

**Reader 1:** But others said, “How can a sinful man do such signs?”

**Narrator:** And there was a division among them. So they said to the blind man again,

**Reader 2:** “What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?”

**Blind Man:** [He said,] “He is a prophet.”

**Narrator:** Now the Jews did not believe that he had been blind and gained his sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained his sight. They asked them,

**Reader 1:** “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How does he now see?”

**Reader 2:** His parents answered and said, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. We do not know how he sees now, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him, he is of age; he can speak for himself.”

**Narrator:** His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone acknowledged him as the Christ, he would be expelled from the synagogue. For this reason his parents said, “He is of age; question him.” So a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him,

**Reader 1:** “Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner.”

**Blind Man:** He replied, “If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see.”

**Reader 2:** So they said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

**Blind Man:** [He answered them,] “I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?”

**Reader 1:** They ridiculed him and said, “You are that man’s disciple; we are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is from.”

**Blind Man:** The man answered and said to them, “This is what is so

amazing, that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him. It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything.”

**Reader 2:** They answered and said to him, “You were born totally in sin, and are you trying to teach us?”

**Narrator:** Then they threw him out. When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said,

**Jesus:** “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

**Blind Man:** [He answered and said,] “Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?”

**Jesus:** [Jesus said to him,] “You have seen him, the one speaking with you is he.”

**Blind Man:** [He said,] “I do believe, Lord,” and he worshiped him.

**Jesus:** [Then Jesus said,] “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind.”

**Narrator:** Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this, and said to him,

**Reader 1:** “Surely we are not also blind, are we?”

**Jesus:** [Jesus said to them,] “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, ‘We see,’ so your sin remains.

## **Homily: Seeing the Light**

Where there’s light, there’s a whole lot of shade. And Jesus, the Light of the World, is throwing off a lot of shade in his continuing controversy with the group of religious leaders who thought they had exclusive insight into God’s ways. Jesus will demonstrate that the know-it-alls may have cloudier vision than they think.

That's the background of this unfolding tale of the Blind Man – who is cured of two types of blindness – one physical, one spiritual; two kinds of healings – one immediate, one gradual. Although the key part of the story is: Jesus takes a back seat and lets the Blind Man star.

First, the Greek words that John chooses in this passage for Blind Man are “typhlos” (blind) and “anthropos” (humanity). He could have used “aner”, which is the word usually applied to “a man”. But instead, John repeatedly calls him Blind Humanity. Do we detect John giving shade?

Jesus sees the Blind Man, and immediately has to straighten out his disciples for wondering whether he was “blind from birth” because of his sin or his parents. He says he is blind so that Jesus can do the works God has sent him to do. And then he spat on the ground, made a clay paste with his saliva, smeared the mud on the Blind Man's eyes, and told him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. He went. He washed. He came back. And he could see.

And now his troubles begin. But what's remarkable is that this former beggar stands up for himself. He has agency. He tells the busybodies who never really saw him when he was begging, that “yes, I was that Blind Man” and how the cure happened. He endured being dragged before the Pharisees who were upset that work had been done on the Sabbath. He was forced to watch his parents get the same grilling by the authorities. (These parents, by the way, got in their own zinger – they told their interrogators to ask their son who was of age and could speak for himself.) He got hauled before the tribunal again and got called a sinner, which led to his bold retort: “One thing I do know is that I was

blind but now I see.” And then he throws some shade, “Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?”

And all throughout this ordeal, the former Blind Man is having another kind of sight restored. He gradually sees Jesus with the eyes of faith. At first he calls him, “the man called Jesus.” Then when challenged by the Pharisees the first time, “He is a prophet.” On his second confrontation, he said that this man Jesus had to be “from God,” which gets him thrown out.

Then Jesus hears of the former Blind Man’s tribulations, and seeks him out. Jesus leads him through a process, asking him if he believes in the Son of Man. “Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus tells him he’s seen him, and in fact he’s speaking with him. That leads to the ex-Blind Man saying, “I do believe, Lord.” The invisible beggar gets the gift of faith that the Pharisees thought they owned.

In this case, seeing is believing. Sometimes it takes a while to see. But step by step, God coaxes us into seeing with the eyes of faith.

Walk in the light, Lourdes. Walk in the light.

#### Discussion Starters:

1. All three readings this Sunday offer us an opportunity to look carefully at how we perceive others. For example, do we ever categorize people according to their age, disease or the physical limitations they must endure? Or do we look into the other’s heart, as God does?
2. How has your image of Jesus changed in the course of your spiritual journey?
3. What have been your “blind spots”?
4. What have been your most surprising insights?



5. How has God's grace influenced your enlightenment? How has your conversion affected your behavior?'

6. How are your Lenten practices helping you to see with the heart?

**Or has something else bubbled up as you pondered this Sunday's readings?**

### GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

**Prayer Leader:** Let us pray now for ourselves and for all who need to be seen with God's eyes.

**Reader 1:**

- For the church and for all believers: May we be open to seeing and witnessing God's light in others. We pray: **Heal us, O God.** (RESPOND: **Heal us, O God.**)
- For all those affected by the corona-virus pandemic, and for the medical researchers and public health specialists searching for ways to respond to it. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
- For the courage to challenge false judgment or gossip in our daily lives, and for openness to new ideas, even when it is uncomfortable. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
- For parents, educators, mediators, counselors and all who work to promote deeper understanding. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
- For all women who face prejudice, inequality and gender disparity in their job assignments and salaries. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
- In thanksgiving for Archbishop-elect Gregory Hartmayer, may he be welcomed by the people of the Archdiocese of Atlanta and be granted peace and wisdom in this new post. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
- For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, and for all those living with HIV/AIDS, that they know our community cares for them. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**

- For all who have died (especially, *name a loved one if you wish*) to see God face to face. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**
- Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Heal us, O God.**

**Prayer Leader:** God of surprises, invite us to see your presence in others. Even though we may be blind to the good in others, help us to see and love them as you would wish. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the ultimate healer..... LET THE CHURCH SAY – AMEN!