

First Reading

1 Samuel 16:1. 6-7, 10-13

David is anointed king of Israel.

The Lord said to Samuel, 'Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen myself a king among his sons.' When Samuel arrived, he caught sight of Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed one stands there before him', but the Lord said to Samuel, 'Take no notice of his appearance or his height for I have rejected him; God does not see as man sees; man looks at appearances but the Lord looks at the heart.' Jesse presented his seven sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen these.' He then asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' He answered, 'There is still one left, the youngest; he is out looking after the sheep.' Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send for him; we will not sit down to eat until he comes.' Jesse had him sent for, a boy of fresh complexion, with fine eyes and pleasant bearing. The Lord said, 'Come, anoint him, for this is the one.' At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him where he stood with his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day on.

The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 32

Response

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

1. The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit.

Response

2. He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort.

Response

3. You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.

Response

4. Surely goodness and kindness
shall follow me all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever.

Response

Second Reading *Ephesians 5:8-14*

Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth. Try to discover what the Lord wants of you, having nothing to do with the futile works of darkness but exposing them by contrast. The things which are done in secret are things that people are ashamed even to speak of; but anything exposed by the light will be illuminated and anything illuminated turns into light.

That is why it is said:

Wake up from your sleep,
rise from the dead,
Christ will shine on you.

The Word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation *Jn 8:12*

Glory and praise to you, O Christ !
I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
anyone who follows me will have eternal life.
Glory and praise to you, O Christ !

Gospel

John 9:1-41

He went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?' 'Neither he nor his parents sinned,' Jesus answered 'he was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

'As long as the day lasts

I must carry out the work of the one who sent me;
the night will soon be here when no one can work.

As long as I am in the world

I am the light of the world.'

Having said this, he spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man. and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one'.

Others said, 'No, he only looks like him'. The man himself said, 'I am the man'. So they said to him, 'Then how do your eyes come to be open?' 'The man called Jesus' he answered 'made a paste, daubed my eyes with it and said to me, "Go and wash at Siloam"; so I went, and when I washed I could see.' They asked, 'Where is he?' 'I don't know' he answered.

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a Sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see'. Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the Sabbath'. Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them.

So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet' replied the man. However, the Jews would not believe that the man had been blind and had gained his sight, without first sending for his parents and asking them, 'Is this man really your son who you say was born blind? If so, how is it that he is now able to see?' His parents answered, 'We know he is our son and we know he was born blind, but we don't know how it is that he can see now, or who opened his eyes. He is old enough: let him speak for himself.' His parents spoke like this out of fear of the Jews, who had already agreed to expel from the synagogue anyone who should acknowledge Jesus as the Christ. This was why his parents said, 'He is old enough; ask him'.

So the Jews again sent for the man and said to him, 'Give glory to God! For our part, we know that this man is a sinner.' The man answered, 'I don't know if he is a sinner; I only know that I was blind and now I can see'. They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He replied, 'I have told you once and you wouldn't listen. Why do you want to hear it all again? Do you want to become his disciples too?' At this they hurled abuse at him: 'You can be his disciple,' they said 'we are disciples of Moses: we know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we don't know where he comes from'. The man replied, 'Now here is an astonishing thing! He has opened my eyes, and you don't know where he comes from! We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but God does listen to men who are devout and do his will. Ever since the world began it is unheard of for anyone to open the eyes of a man who was born blind; if this man were not from God, he couldn't do a thing.' 'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you

The Gospel of the Lord.

Prayer of the Faithful

Celebrant: As children of light, we turn in prayer to God our Father that he may continue to enlighten us.

1. For those who are suffering in the current outbreak of Covid-19 that they may be restored to health and (that) our loving Father will strengthen our faith and trust in his goodness and divine providence.
Lord hear us.
2. That our compassionate Father will touch all those affected by the current outbreak with healing and peace.
Lord hear us.
3. We pray for those who live with blindness or other physical limitations. May the lord be with them in the challenges they face, and may they find the support they need to be fully engaged in the life of their communities and workplaces.
Lord hear us.
4. Let us ask the Lord to bless the work of those who seek cures for cancer, Covid-19 and illnesses of various kinds. May the Spirit of wisdom guide the work of scientists and researchers, and may they be motivated by the desire to bring blessings to humanity.
Lord hear us.
5. For the faithful departed, that by God's mercy they may be released from the darkness of death and enjoy the vision of God.
Lord hear us.

Celebrant:

We ask you, Lord, to continue guiding us by your light, so that we may avoid all that is dark and sinful and walk always in your ways. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reflection on Today's Gospel

In today's Gospel we have another example of God's choice, one which confuses the religious leaders of the day: a blind beggar who becomes a theologian! John's beautifully crafted story tells how a blind man comes to see that light in Jesus, both physically and spiritually. When Jesus' disciples first see the blind man they presume that his affliction is a result of sin. But Jesus sees in the blind man something else: this roadside beggar who has always inhabited a world of darkness will be the one to display the work of God and point to who Jesus really is.

When Jesus heals the blind man, he returns home a new man. His surprised neighbours check their memory and some refuse to believe their eyes. They are unwilling to let this new event interfere with their fast memories-in spite of the man's protest: "I am the man." He doesn't claim any special knowledge of the one who cured him but identifies him simply as "The man called Jesus".

The Pharisees have their seminar too and are doubtful that, given who Jesus is, he could produce such a sign. Unlike the healed man, the Pharisees are sure who Jesus is. But as they grow more blind, the former blind man grows in insight and now identifies Jesus as a prophet. This is not a welcome development, and the man's parents are hauled in as prospective allies in the case against Jesus. They state that their son is old enough to speak for himself. And speak for himself he does! He refuses to deny his own experience: "I only know I was blind and now I can see".

He soon realises that he will be listened to only when his testimony confirms the prejudice of his interrogators. But rather than frighten him, this knowledge frees him to develop his evaluation of Jesus as a man of God. He does this so well that he annoys his listeners who refuse to be enlightened by the likes of this simpleton. They drive him away, but Jesus seeks out this budding theologian and reveals himself to him. Now the rejected man is the only one in the community who sees Jesus as the Son of Man.

We have been elected to display God's works. In our baptism we have been chosen to point to Jesus by the witness of our Christian lives. To many people, including ourselves, we may seem an unlikely choice. But our greatness lies in the fact that we have been chosen, not in ourselves alone. Allowing God to work in us, we can keep alive the story of God's eccentric choices!