

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

26th MARCH 2017

First Reading

1 Samuel 16. 1-13

A reading from the first book of Samuel

16 The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.”² Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you, and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’”³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.”⁴ Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, “Do you come peaceably?”⁵ He said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.⁶ When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is now before the Lord.”⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.”⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.”¹⁰ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen any of these.”¹¹ Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.”¹² He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, “Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.”¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Hear the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Psalm 23

A.P.B.A page 243

1 The Lord is my shepherd:
I shall not want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters.

3 He restores my soul:
He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.

4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil:

for you are with me, your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies:

you anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life:
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 10

A reading from the first letter to the Corinthians

¹⁰ I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. ⁷ Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.” ⁸ We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. ⁹ We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents.

¹⁰ And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

¹¹ These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. ¹³ No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

¹⁴ Therefore, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. ¹⁵ I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶ The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. ¹⁸ Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar? ¹⁹ What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰ No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons.

²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. ²² Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

²³ “All things are lawful,” but not all things are beneficial. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. ²⁴ Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other. ²⁵ Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience, ²⁶ for “the earth and its fullness are the Lord’s.” ²⁷ If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. ²⁸ But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, out of consideration for the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— ²⁹ I mean the other’s conscience, not your own. For why should my liberty be subject to the judgment of someone else’s conscience? ³⁰ If I partake with thankfulness, why should I be denounced because of that for which I give thanks? ³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. ³² Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, ³³ just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own

advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. 11 ¹ Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Hear the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Gospel

John 9 1-41

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John
Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

9 As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, 7 saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. 8 The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." 10 But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." 12 They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." 13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. 15 Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." 16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. 17 So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight 19 and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 20 His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." 25 He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." 26 They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" 28 Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." 30 The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does

listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” 34 They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

35 Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” 36 He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” 37 Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” 38 He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. 39 Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” 40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” 41 Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Sentence

‘I am the light of the world,’ says the Lord; ‘those who follow me will have the light of life’
John 8.12

Prayer of the season

Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing that you have made,
and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent:
create and make in us new and contrite hearts,
that we, worthily lamenting our sins,
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may obtain of you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer of the day

Gracious God
in order that we children of earth might discern good from evil
you sent your Son to be the light of the world:
as the light of Christ shines upon us,
may we learn what pleases you,
and live in truth and goodness;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Supplementary readings

Exodus 5.1-9, 5.19-6.1

Psalm 69.20-28

Matthew 27.1-31

Prayer Response

Jesus, light of the world.

scatter the darkness from our hearts and minds.