

**March 19, 2023**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent**

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

Psalm: 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

**Notes from Bishop Peter**

\*\*\*NOTE: The 19th of March is normally the Feast of Saint Joseph; however the Sunday of Lent takes precedence. We celebrate St. Joseph tomorrow, March 20th.

THEME: Lord Jesus, please let me see as you see.

“Not as man sees does God see.

Man sees the appearance but God looks into the heart.” (1 Samuel)

\* The word “see” has two meanings – to see physically and to see in the sense of belief – FAITH.

1. The author of the Letter to the Ephesians encourages his recent converts to live as “PEOPLE OF LIGHT because “light produces every kind of goodness, righteousness and truth.” This light comes from Jesus in Baptism. Darkness is a symbol of evil.
  - a. Examples: people who are honest, who do not speak ill of others, who are faithful to their spouses and children, who live a clean life and who have nothing to hide.
  - b. On the contrary people do evil things in darkness or their works are darkness such as: cheating on their spouses, stealing, embezzling, home invasions, abusing drugs or alcohol, discrediting other people, watching porn on the internet and so forth.
  - c. Lent: a time for conversion. Here in the Archdiocese of Hartford most parishes offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation every Monday of Lent from 6-7 in order to prepare for Easter, when the light of the risen Christ will shine forth.
2. This is the only cure of someone known to have been born blind in the whole Bible.

- a. Like the Samaritan woman of last week's Gospel, this man is HUMBLE and grows little by little in his faith as he interacts with Jesus. First, he sees Jesus as a "man." (Of course he is.) Then a prophet, then the Son of Man (= Messiah, the one who would come from heaven to bring people together and make them participants in God's life) and finally he worships Jesus as Lord. HE TRULY SEES both physically and spiritually.
- b. The Pharisees in the story (not all Pharisees were like that) are closed-minded. They reason that if someone cures on the Sabbath, he cannot possibly be from God. Their worldview would collapse if they had to admit that Jesus is from God, even though he cured on the Sabbath.
- c. Jesus went against the customs established by the Scribes who interpreted the Sabbath rest very strictly to the point that curing someone was considered work.
  - For Jesus, to cure a human being trumps the Sabbath rest as interpreted by the Scribes.

### 3. How to apply this to today.

- a. Because we have been baptized and received the Holy Spirit we are empowered to see as Jesus does: To serve others because we see Jesus where he says he is: ("I was hungry, thirsty, sick, in prison, naked..."), in the poor, the immigrant and the voiceless. To heed Jesus' call to work patiently and prudently for peace rather than rush to use violence, to care for a husband or wife who is ill or an aging parent... People who do this and other good works are open and free.
- b. The contrary, unfortunately some baptized Christians are among them: People who set up standards and judge others by them: For example, white supremacists, anti-Semites, racists, meaning to consider those of another race inferior to themselves, who scorn undocumented immigrants or gay or lesbians or transgendered persons.
- c. Other examples of failing to see as Jesus does: xenophobia = fear of the foreigner from which our ancestors suffered and recent immigrants suffer today;

- The Hospital of Saint Raphael was created in New Haven by the compassionate Sisters of Charity because Catholics and Jews were not welcome in Grace New Haven Hospital
- People who drink too much and refuse to reform...
- The example of Millard Fuller whose wife threatened to leave him because he was spending too much time away from his family. He finally founded Habitat for Humanity. He saw the light!

4. Eucharist: In light of what you teach us today, Lord Jesus, please increase my faith so that I can see and act as you do.

***Amen.***