

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT, 19th MARCH 2023

First Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1-13 Samuel anoints David as king of Israel (NIVUK)

¹⁶ The LORD said to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.' ² But Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.' 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 to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.' ⁴ Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, 'Do you come in peace?' ⁵ Samuel replied, 'Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.' Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. ⁶ When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, 'Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD.' ⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.' ⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, 'The LORD has not chosen this one either.' ⁹ Jesse then made Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, 'Nor has the LORD chosen this one.' ¹⁰ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, 'The LORD has not chosen these.' ¹¹ So he asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' 'There is still the youngest,' Jesse answered. 'He is tending the sheep.' Samuel said, 'Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.' ¹² So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, 'Rise and anoint him; this is the one.' ¹³ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

Psalm 23

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, ³ he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley,^[a] I will 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 your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 5:8-14 Live as children of the light (NIVUK)

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible – and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴ This is why it is said: 'Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.'

GOSPEL: John 9:1-41 Jesus opens the eyes of a man born blind (NIVUK)

⁹ As he went 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 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ As long as it is

day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' ⁶ After saying this, he spat on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. ⁷ 'Go,' he told him, 'wash in the Pool of Siloam' (this word means 'Sent'). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. ⁸ His neighbours and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, 'Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?' ⁹ Some claimed that he was. Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' But he himself insisted, 'I am the man.' ¹⁰ 'How then were your eyes opened?' they asked. ¹¹ He replied, 'The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.' ¹² 'Where is this man?' they asked him. 'I don't know,' he said. ¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴ Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵ Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. 'He put mud on my eyes,' the man replied, 'and I washed, and now I see.' ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.' But others asked, 'How can a sinner perform such signs?' So they were divided. ¹⁷ Then they turned again to the blind man, 'What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' The man replied, 'He is a prophet.' ¹⁸ They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. ¹⁹ 'Is this your son?' they asked. 'Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?' ²⁰ 'We know he is our son,' the parents answered, 'and we know he was born blind. ²¹ But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.' ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ That was why his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.' ²⁴ A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. 'Give glory to God by telling the truth,' they said. 'We know this man is a sinner.' ²⁵ He replied, 'Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!' ²⁶ Then they asked him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' ²⁷ He answered, 'I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?' ²⁸ Then they hurled insults at him and said, 'You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! ²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from.' ³⁰ The man answered, 'Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. ³² Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' ³⁴ To this they replied, 'You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!' And they threw him out. ³⁵ Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' ³⁶ 'Who is he, sir?' the man asked. 'Tell me so that I may believe in him.' ³⁷ Jesus said, 'You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.' ³⁸ Then the man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshipped him. ³⁹ Jesus said,^[a] 'For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.' ⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, 'What? Are we blind too?' ⁴¹ Jesus said, 'If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.'