

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

YEAR A

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Saving God,
you sent Jesus
to wash away our sins
and help us to see things
your way.
Do not let our hearts go blind
so that we do not love
other people
as much as we love ourselves.
We make this prayer to you
through Jesus, your Son.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Today's readings focus on conversion from darkness to light. We have chosen the New Testament reading instead of the one from the Old Testament because Paul's letter relates more directly to the Gospel theme. In our first reading, Paul reminds his community that before they knew Christ, they lived in the darkness of sin. But now that they are baptized, they must live as children of the light, doing what is good and right and honest. Paul believes baptism should make a radical difference in our lives.

The Gospel story begins with the healing of a blind man. But the dialogue which follows leads us to focus on spiritual sight. The blind man accepts the free gift of Jesus and receives both physical and spiritual sight. Those who reject the power of Jesus remain spiritually blind. In their blindness, they refuse to "see" who Jesus is. ("We know he is not a man of God.")

In contrast, the blind man, now healed by Jesus, insists simply, "I do know one thing; I was blind and now I can see." The story's climax comes with the statement of faith, "Yes, Lord, I do believe."

"I am the light of the world." Jesus gives us sight.

FIRST READING: *Ephesians 5:8-14*

This is a reading from Paul's letter to the Christians living in Ephesus.

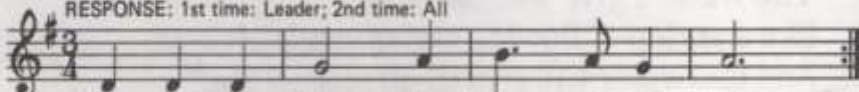
Brothers and sisters,
there was a time when you were darkness,
but now you are light in the Lord.
Live as children of the light.
When we live in the light,
we do what is good and right and honest.
Try to learn what pleases the Lord.
Never take part in things
that are evil or done in secret.
Instead, let everything be seen in the open.
Everything done in the light is seen as it really is.
That is why it is said,

"Wake up, you who sleep;
rise up from the dead,
and Christ will give you light."

The Word of the Lord.

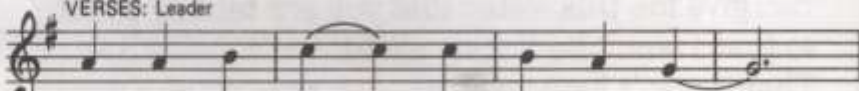
RESPONSE: *Psalm 36*

RESPONSE: 1st time: Leader; 2nd time: All



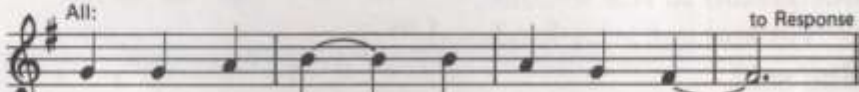
You are the light, the foun - tain of life.

VERSES: Leader



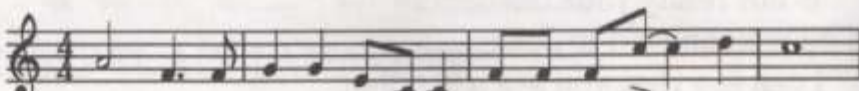
1. Your love is true and sets us free.
2. You give us life that makes us rise.

All: to Response

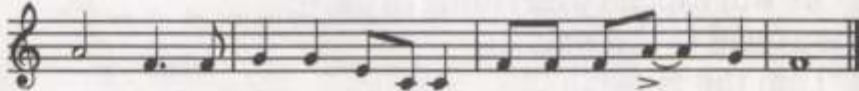


1. Your love is true and sets us free.
2. You give us life that makes us rise.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



"I am the light in dark-ness, you will have life in me.



I am the light in dark-ness, you will have life in me."

After Gospel, repeat Acclamation

GOSPEL: *John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38*

This is a reading from the Gospel of John.

NARRATOR: As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been born blind. And he said to his disciples:

SPEAKER 1: While it is day, I must do the work of the One who sent me. When night comes, no one can work. While I am here, I am the light of the world.

NARRATOR: Jesus spat on the ground, made mud, and put the mud on the man's eyes. Then Jesus told him:

SPEAKER 1: Go wash in the pool of Siloam.

NARRATOR: So the man went and washed his eyes and came back able to see. His neighbors and the people who had always seen him begging began to ask:

SPEAKER 2: Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?

NARRATOR: Some said it was. Others said it was not he, but someone who looked like him. The man himself said:

SPEAKER 3: Yes, I am the same man.

NARRATOR: Next some of the people took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had healed him. The Pharisees asked the man how he was now able to see. He told them:

SPEAKER 3: A man called Jesus put mud on my eyes. I washed it off, and now I can see.

SPEAKER 4: The one who did this cannot be a man of God, because he works on the Sabbath.

SPEAKER 2: But if one is a sinner, how can he do these miracles?

SPEAKER 3: I don't know if he's a sinner or not. But I do know one thing—I was blind, and now I can see.

NARRATOR: And they began to argue about it. Then they asked the blind man again:

SPEAKER 4: Since it was your eyes he healed, what do you have to say about him?

SPEAKER 3: He is a prophet.

NARRATOR: Because the man said, "He is a prophet," they threw him out of the temple. Jesus went and found the man and asked him:

SPEAKER 1: Do you believe in the One sent by God?

SPEAKER 3: Tell me who he is so that I can believe in him.

SPEAKER 1: I am the One sent by God.

SPEAKER 3: Yes, Lord, I do believe!

NARRATOR: And he knelt down to worship him.]

The Gospel of the Lord.

[] Reader may omit text that appears in brackets.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

What did you hear? Allow the children to retell the story or to state simply what they heard, without discussion.

Begin on the level of human sight and gradually move to spiritual sight. Help the children reflect on their own experiences with sight. This may be done by asking questions like:

- What is your favorite color?
- What is your favorite book or story?
- When did you learn to read?
- What is your favorite place to visit? What does it look like?

Children come easily to a sense of gratitude for the gift of sight because they experience it every day.

Help the children reflect on the blindness of the man in the story. He had never seen colors, or places or books. Imagine his joy and gratitude when he was healed and could see. He was so grateful that he even gave praise to Jesus when the Pharisees were angry with him and tried to make him say that Jesus didn't really heal him. And when he said that Jesus was a prophet, they threw him out of the temple.

The Pharisees, even though they could see things with their eyes, were blind to the power of Jesus. They didn't believe, even when Jesus had given such a powerful sign; that is a kind of blindness. We have two ways of seeing: with the eyes of our body and with the eyes of faith.

The man in the story received a wonderful gift to be able to see with the eyes of his body. He also received the wonderful gift of faith. So he was grateful for the gift of seeing in both ways and said, "Yes, Lord, I do believe."

When we were born, we had the gift of seeing with the eyes of our body. When we are baptized, we celebrate the gift of faith, of seeing things in a new way. This new way of seeing helps us to live as Jesus lived and as Jesus wants us to live as children of light. For example, sometimes when we find it hard to love someone, our faith helps us. Jesus, the Light of the world, lives in us and helps us to see others the way he sees them, and to love them the way he loves them.

When we come together with other Christians at mass, we thank Jesus for all the wonderful gifts he has given us. We thank him for the gift of faith that helps us live as children of the light. And we can say, with the man in the story, "Yes, Lord, I do believe!"

