

## LENT: A TIME TO FOLLOW JESUS TO THE CROSS

**Fourth Sunday in Lent**

**March 2, 2008**

**1 Samuel 16:1-13**

**Psalm 23**

**Ephesians 5:8-14**

**John 9:1-41**

### **Things Done In the Dark**

Of course, “darkness” is used as a metaphor. Nowadays we don’t often spend much time in the real dark. If we’re out at night there are streetlights or headlights to illumine the way. At home there’s the comfort of light bulbs and the glow of TVs. Even adventurous cave explorers take light with them.

Yet darkness is unfortunately not strange to us. At times it can be dark indeed.

Circumstances can seem hopeless. We can sink into depths of depression. We wander in the gloom of ignorance and sin. Sometimes we cower in the moral darkness of things concealed and secrets hidden from sight. Truth be told, we never stand very far from the dark of the grave. The journey of Lent began with the dark of ashes: “Remember that you are dust...”

God’s light shines into each kind of darkness.

The story of the man born blind (John 9) works on a number of levels. The very mud of creation, the same earth to which we will one day return, Jesus uses to bring sight. The man’s eyes gradually open to sight. Yet, with his eyes now open, the man also learns to see. His new eyes see prejudice and ignorance. He sees the darkness of false judgment. And he begins to see that he has been brought into a new vision of the world. And his own learning process has brought him into a new relationship with his healer, the One Who Is Sent.

When we live into our healing, we discover what God is leading us toward. “The light will show what these things are really like” (Ephesians 5:13, *CEV*).

Yes, we already know quite enough about darkness. The problem is when we walk in darkness, when we’re accustomed to it, we need the light to show us the way out.

God’s light shines, and gives us the power to be more than the darkness, more than the dust from which we have come. “Now you are people of the light because you belong to

the Lord” (Ephesians 5:8, *CEV*). When the Lord has touched us, formed us with holy hands, the darkness is no longer part of us, because we now shine.

*This week’s Reflection was prepared by Paul Bellan-Boyer, Parish Deacon at St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Jersey City, NJ.*

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**This week we remember to pray for the work of the Bible Societies in: Greece –** With thanks to God for the success of the mobile Bible Exhibition and the distribution of the Children’s Bible, and with prayers for the upcoming production of *The Prophetologion* (Old Testament passages for the Greek Orthodox liturgy in today’s Greek with Septuagint text), and for the ongoing translation of the Old Testament into today’s Greek; **Macedonia –** With thanks to God for the revision and publication of the Macedonian Bible and New Testament and with prayers for its widespread distribution, and with prayers for improvements to the social and economic difficulties that the country is facing; **Albania –** With thanks to God for the completion of the interconfessional translation of the New Testament, its publication, and the production of an audio version, and with prayers for the preparatory work on the interconfessional translation of the Old Testament, and for an improvement in the country’s economic situation.

**Activity Corner:** Looking for the “Light”

Supplies needed: Bible; Bible Concordance; 8-1/2” x 11” construction paper (yellow or white); pens/pencils; scissor; candle (optional)

In this week’s Gospel text, Jesus says that he is “the light of the world” (9:5). With members of your household, discuss what Jesus means when he refers to himself as “the light.” Look up the word “light” in a Bible concordance and see how many times the word appears in John’s Gospel, and see how many verses you can find where the word “light” refers to Jesus. Ask each member of your household to select a verse and describe how the word “light” is used. Using a sheet of construction paper, trace and then cut out the shape of a light bulb. On one side, ask each one to copy their selected verse. On the reverse side, ask each one to write prayer expressing thanks to Jesus for being our “light.” Consider conducting your devotions during the week in a darkened room with just one candle lit. Encourage everyone to share their prayers during devotional time. Conclude by singing “Amazing Grace” or one of your favorite hymns.