

4th Sunday Lent Year "A"

March 29-30, 2014 7:00pm, 10:00am

Readings: 1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13; Eph. 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

The theme of the darkness vs. the light is a common theme in the Scriptures. It is also a common theme in the secular world as well. Ask any law enforcement officer, and he/she will probably assure you that by far the most crime is committed under the cover of darkness. This is for obvious reasons of detection, but I believe it is also accurate to say that in general people's behavior is much less controlled in the darkness than it would be in broad daylight.

There is a certain anonymity provided in the cover of darkness upon which many thrive. I remember when I went through my car stage, being very interested in sports cars. We owned a 1971 Camaro, a car that I disliked as long as I was stuck in the extremely cramped back seat. But once I got my license... it was great. It was in decent shape, but had some flaws that we covered with *Bondo* body filler. However, these flaws were barely detectable at night. At night, after a football game it looked in mint condition.

In our reading today from Saint Paul's letter to the Ephesians, we were told that there was a time when we were in the darkness, but now we are in the light of the Lord. Light produces every kind of goodness, justice and truth. We are told to awake from the dead, to rise from sleep. Jesus Christ makes a claim that nobody has ever made before, period. Who is this son of Man, that I may believe in him? "You have seen him. He is speaking to you now."

The reality of darkness in our world is impossible to escape. We see it in the daily reports on television...horrible and unspeakable acts of violence, abuse and rampant immorality. Here is the question—Do we really accept in our hearts that Jesus is the very light of the world, singularly, that he is the way, the truth, and the life?

Or have we bought into the popular thinking that Christianity is one road to truth, just one avenue among others? This is popular, extremely so, even among believing Christians - this is also quite disturbing. It is disturbing because nowhere does Jesus Christ say that he is anyone other than the very Son of God. The singular love of God gave us His only begotten Son that we might have life.

Furthermore, he told us to go and baptize the nations, preaching the Good News to all who would listen. In the Old Testament, the Lord sent prophets to the people of Israel; now he has sent his son. Our first reading taught that Lord judges not by appearances, but he “looks into the heart.” When he looks into our heart, what is it that he will find? Will he see a person of integrity, someone who practices the virtues diligently, or will he find a person who has gotten too comfortable just going through the motions? We can put on our Sunday best, say the right things, and be empty inside.

We can fool some of the people some of the time, but not all of the people all of the time- but we cannot fool God any of the time. If we acknowledge our sinfulness, we are being persons of integrity. We may not always like what we see in ourselves, but we should be able to look at ourselves, for at least our lives will be in the light.

Lent gives us this annual opportunity to come forth openly and honestly from the darkness, to revel in the light of Christ, our Savior. *Laetare* Sunday offers a glimpse of joy, now that we have passed the halfway point in our Lenten observance. We have a distance to travel, but the goal of our Lenten observance is becoming clearer. May our spiritual blindness be overcome by the light of Christ's truth. The light is gaining ground, and our perseverance will be rewarded. Let us seize this opportunity right now, today and do so decisively. The Lord expects no less from us.