

# Open Our Eyes, Lord

**REFLECTION:** Jesus, I remember a time I suffered in my life... I remember wanting to be free of this suffering... I remember... I remember...



## WISDOM FROM THE CELLS

For many years, I found myself in a dark place that made me stop believing in God. I was 18 years old when I committed the worst act of my life that got me to prison. I remember praying to God to help me out, telling him that I never intended to take another person's life. As I proceeded through my court process, I eventually received a double life sentence. I would never get the opportunity to parole. So I turned my back on God and started to abuse alcohol and drugs. I felt that God had abandoned me since I was going to spend the rest of my life in prison. I was at a point where I had lost all hope.

One day I was at my lowest point in life, to the point where I felt like I was living just because I had to. I had given up. I prayed to God asking him to just to be with me in that moment. I no longer wanted to experience this type of suffering. I wanted to surrender completely. As I sat there on my bed, I got an overwhelming sense of relief. I felt renewed and healed. Since that day, I have not lost hope or faith in God. There are many aspects of my life that still need healing, but I know now that God never abandoned me, and most importantly, that God loves us unconditionally.

- **Julio, who is in a California State Prison.**

## PENITENTIAL RITE

**Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.**  
May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.  
**R. Amen.**

## OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray:  
Father of light,  
You let your Son open the eyes of those eager for your light. Let Jesus, the light of the world, heal us and give us faith and understanding. Let Jesus restore our sight so that we may see the way that leads to you.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**

## OUR FATHER

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy Kingdom come,  
thy will be done**

**on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us,  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**R. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

## SIGN OF PEACE

Jesus, you said to your apostles: "I leave you peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom where you live forever and ever. **Amen.**"

The peace of the Lord be with you always.  
**R. And with your spirit.**

## LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: **Have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: **Have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: **Grant us peace.**

This is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are we who are called to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

## COMMUNION

## CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray:

God our Father,

Wake us up from the night of sin by the power of your Son, Jesus. Let the light of Christ shine in us, so that those around us may discover in us a bit of the goodness of your Son, of his compassionate love, and the new life he brought.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**



# LITURGY OF THE WORD

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

The LORD said to Samuel: "Fill your horn with oil, and be on your way. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen my king from among his sons." As Jesse and his sons came to the sacrifice, Samuel looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is here before him." But the LORD said to Samuel: "Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the LORD looks into the heart." In the same way Jesse presented seven sons before Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any one of these." Then Samuel asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" Jesse replied, "There is still the youngest, who is tending the sheep." Samuel said to Jesse, "Send for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until he arrives here." Jesse sent and had the young man brought to them. He was ruddy, a youth handsome to behold and making a splendid appearance. The LORD said, "There—anoint him, for this is the one!" Then Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed David in the presence of his brothers; and from that day on, the spirit of the LORD rushed upon David.

The Word of the Lord.  
**R. Thanks be to God.**

## Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 23: 1-3a, 3b-4, 5

**R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;  
beside restful waters he leads me;  
he refreshes my soul.

**R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

He guides me in right paths  
for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk in the dark valley  
I fear no evil; for you are at my side  
With your rod and your staff  
that give me courage.

**R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

You spread the table before me  
in the sight of my foes;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

**R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.**

## Second Reading: Ephesians 5: 8-14

Brothers and sisters: You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them, for it is shameful even to mention the things done by them in secret; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it says: "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

The Word of the Lord.  
**R. Thanks be to God.**

## Gospel: John 9: 1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam" — which means Sent —. So he went and washed, and came back able to see. His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, "Isn't this the one who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is," but others said, "No, he just looks like him." He said, "I am." They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees. Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a sabbath. So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see." So some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath." But others said, "How can a sinful man do such signs?" And there was a division among them. So they said to the blind man again, "What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." They answered and said to him, "You were born totally in sin, and are you trying to teach us?" Then they threw him out. When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered and said, "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "I do believe, Lord," and he worshiped him.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

# MEDITATION: A NEW VISION

these were long days  
i had heard of jesus  
struggling to bring  
some understanding  
of the kingdom of god  
of a different way of living  
i had heard that  
jesus was going to  
pass by the plaza  
and how he was open  
to suffering around him

on an early afternoon  
i heard crowds of  
people coming  
closer and closer  
to where i was  
i quickly covered my face  
sitting as a condemned one  
i could hear crowds  
of people getting closer

i heard people ask  
among themselves  
what i had done to be  
born with blindness  
i moved away nervously  
i had lived years and years  
being judged  
i was always examining  
inside my own self  
yet i could never discover  
what i had done wrong

a man came up to me  
and said this man has  
done no wrong  
i desire to heal him  
and bring him  
into the light

i heard him dig  
his hands into the dirt  
i heard him make mud  
with his spittle  
it sounded as if he cupped  
the moist earth in his hands  
for a moment  
there was a pause  
i was unable to see  
this man gently went  
over me and said to me

samuel  
i rub this earth  
over your eyes  
you go through  
day after day  
sitting as a prisoner  
in this courtyard  
people call you a sinner

i reached out to feel him  
and he took me  
by the shoulders  
which moved me

i live without vision  
i yearn to be able  
to see to be freed  
from this suffering

this man continued  
rubbing moisture  
against my eye lids  
and covering my eyes

then he said to me  
now go and wash  
in the pool of siloam

i wandered blindly  
without vision  
groping to find the path  
that would lead me  
to the pool  
i felt during this walk  
how difficult it has been  
to live without vision  
i longed to be able  
to walk along the path  
without fear of  
being robbed

without fear of falling  
into ditches  
so i reached the pool  
i had bathed in  
countless times  
but this time was different  
i splashed cool water  
against the caked dried dirt  
burdens falling  
at the same time  
light was slowly appearing  
at last i was able to see  
what water looks like

i rushed back hurriedly  
to where i live  
to share my joy  
when i arrived at my house  
i was surrounded  
by neighbors  
this time they spoke to me  
telling me  
weren't you blind?  
what happened?

this man passing by  
he put mud on my eyes  
i washed and now i can see  
i don't even know his name  
or where he lives  
yet when he rubbed  
this earth around my eyes  
i felt power, strength, and light  
flowing out of him  
as if i am not alone any longer  
i felt that i don't have to do  
everything by my own power  
that his power can reach in  
and even take away blindness

i felt everyday  
i would get up and sit  
in the same place  
but there was  
no meaning to my life  
i had no vision  
i did not know  
where i was going  
or how to get anywhere  
i felt overwhelmed  
by the problems of life

but as he stood before me  
as he let his presence  
pour into me  
i felt something change inside  
he touched not just my eyes  
but my thirsting spirit

one of my neighbors  
cynically commented  
you are going to  
have problems with  
the religious authorities  
they have already  
interrogated your parents  
you realize today is  
the sabbath and  
the person who cured you  
is jesus who already is  
an enemy of the pharisees

all this did not make  
any difference to me  
all i know is i was blind  
lacking vision for years  
and a compassionate one  
took pity on me  
has given me spirit  
someone came rushing  
saying the pharisees  
wanted to talk to me

i entered a hostile room  
they were sitting around  
a large table  
were you the one  
born blind?  
yes, i said  
and how were you cured?  
so i told them quite clearly  
what happened to me

but this man jesus  
broke the law  
he cannot do this

i didn't care  
what happened to me  
i was going to defend  
the light i had seen

i tell you  
i had been blind all my life  
and he saved me  
he did nothing wrong

but these so called  
wise men  
became indignant

who are you to tell us  
what is right or wrong?  
after all you are a sinner  
you always have been  
you will never be allowed  
to worship here again  
in the synagogue  
you are now  
one of his followers  
we know your type  
we follow mooses  
and keep all the laws

so here i was up  
against the most powerful  
religious leaders  
in the nation  
arguing with them  
they seemed so convinced  
they were right  
they had the truth  
that god was on their side  
but they were blind  
i felt this strongly  
they could not see  
they had no vision of  
what god wanted  
for his people  
they only cared  
about themselves  
they didn't care about  
the good of their people  
they really worship themselves  
and their fulfilling of the law  
i realized in that room  
that they were filled  
with antagonism  
was this a consequence  
of having sight?  
i could never again  
be blind

one of them  
the most violent  
came over where i stood  
and asked me  
so you want to follow  
this sinner jesus?  
then get away from us!  
they all laughed  
as he picked me up  
and threw me out the door

i felt uncomfortable all day  
and preferred to go back  
to my neighborhood

as i was walking  
still feeling the strength  
of the hate of these men  
someone passed me  
and said  
samuel  
i had heard this voice  
before but this time  
i could see his face  
i was not able to say  
anything for a long while  
it was jesus  
and he asked me  
samuel, do you believe  
in the son of man?

friend  
tell me who you are  
so i may believe  
and he said  
i have restored your sight

jesus, i believe  
and i thank you  
stay close to me always

