

Open Our Eyes, Lord

4th Sunday of Lent
Cycle A | March 15, 2026

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.**



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 moses
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
anyway 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



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

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.**

