



USC Caruso
Catholic Center

Fourth Sunday of Lent Cycle A

Family Prayer Service

Presider: In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit

Let us acknowledge the times which we have not been faithful to God.

Penitential Rite A

All: I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,
(striking your breast, say:)
through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
(Then continue with:)
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Opening Prayer:

Presider:

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen

A Reading from the First Book of Samuel:

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

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 137:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6 (6ab)

R. Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!

By the streams of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. On the aspens of that land we hung up our harps.

R. Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!

For there our captors asked of us the lyrics of our songs, and our despoilers urged us to be joyous: "Sing for us the songs of Zion!"

R. Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!

How could we sing a song of the LORD in a foreign land? If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand be forgotten!

R. Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!

May my tongue cleave to my palate if I remember you not, if I place not Jerusalem ahead of my joy.

R. Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!

A Reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians:

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

Verse before the Gospel

John 3:16

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so everyone who believes in him might have eternal life.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to John:

Longer Form, John 9:1-41

As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, 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.” So they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?” He replied, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went there and washed and was able to see.” And they said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I don’t know.”

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.”

Now the Jews did not believe that he had been blind and gained his sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained his sight. They asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How does he now see?” His parents answered and said, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. We do not know how he sees now, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him, he is of age; he can speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone acknowledged him as the Christ, he would be expelled from the synagogue. For this reason his parents said, “He is of age; question him.”

So a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner." He replied, "If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see." So they said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?" They ridiculed him and said, "You are that man's disciple; we are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is from." The man answered and said to them, "This is what is so amazing, that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him. It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything." 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. Then Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind."

Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not also blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, 'We see, so your sin remains.'"

The Gospel of the Lord

Reflection/Family Discussion on the readings and Gospel:
by Fr. Joe Kim, OFM Conv.

Might I invite a moment of humility and honesty? Has the following ever happened to you? Perhaps it's an assignment for school or an important exam given to you by a professor...maybe it's a major project tasked to you by your boss or company. Perhaps it's your parents or another family member or close friend who has asked you to do something, anything... and whatever it is, the result is far less than what was expected or hoped for. Perhaps deemed catastrophic and utter failure.

How did you react to that moment? Did you blame others?

Did you find yourself engulfed in excuses? My professor assigned too much material. The lecture wasn't clear. I wasn't given enough time. My boss has unrealistic deadlines and expectations. My coworkers aren't pulling their weight. My family doesn't know how busy I am. My friends don't care enough about me. Again, a moment of honesty: was it really the other person? Was it really the project, work, or task? Or perhaps, just perhaps, was it us?

Was I fully capable of doing what was asked or expected of me, but did I "drop the ball" as it were? Did I mismanage my time? Did I choose to do other things rather than focusing on the work or task? Let me make the connection and use spiritual language here: was I unfaithful? Unfaithful to what was entrusted to me and what I know I am fully capable of doing? Isn't there that part of our hearts that we wrestle with that when faced with our failures and mistakes (our unfaithfulness) that we turn our gaze to others the place the blame on them and rationalize it in our minds to say it's not me, it's not my fault. If we humbly recognize that we do this, can we admit that we do this to God as well?

We hear of this in our first reading today. In their extraordinary relationship of love with God, it was Israel, that time and time again, was unfaithful to covenant God made with them. Time and again, God unfailingly continued to remain faithful. It was not that God gave up on Israel and that was why they were conquered and carried off in exile by Babylon. Rather, it was Israel's continued unfaithfulness and refusal to recognize this unfaithfulness that resulted in destruction of their nation. Isn't this what sin and unfaithfulness leads to? Not punishment, but rather our own destruction and unhappiness! When I choose to be self-centered, when I choose to think only of myself, when I choose my own good over others, when it's all and only about me, we are doomed to be alone, isolated and separated, devoid of relationship, life and love. And without that humility and honesty, we blame others, we blame God for our suffering, hardships... "hells" of our own making.

But this is not the end! Rather, it is the beginning of the even greater gift of new life that manifests from the ever-faithful, gratuitous, infinite love of God. So great and faithful is God's love for us, that not only does He not count our sins or offenses, He uses these very things as the means of even greater gifts of love, life, and blessing! For the people of Israel in our first reading, it was King Cyrus and the kingdom of Persia who restored Israel to the promised end and rebuilt the temple! A king and nation who was not part of the covenant – unbelievers, whom God used as a means of new beginnings, restoration, and healing! In our gospels, in the same way the "serpent in the desert" in the time of Moses was lifted up and all who were bitten by the serpents looked upon it would live (what was the source of death became the source of healing and life!), so will the Son of Man, Jesus, be lifted up upon the cross.

What was previously known as source of death (the cross) became the source of new and everlasting life with Jesus's death on the cross! He did not come to condemn the world for its sin and unfaithfulness, but rather, that the world might be saved through Him. May this Lent bring you to deeper understanding of this truth! May this Lent grant you the humility and honesty to acknowledge your need of forgiveness and healing, looking upon and placing our faith in Jesus, may he bring you to new and everlasting life and happiness!

What are things you need to take ownership of and not place the blame on others?

What are the things in your life that you are in need of forgiveness and new life?

How will you continue to foster greater selflessness and generous giving? What concrete actions will you commit to this Lent?

Nicene Creed:

ALL:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

(bow)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

(raise from bow)

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen

Presider:

To our God, who is rich in mercy, whose love for us is immeasurable, let us offer our prayers:

Intercessions:

For our Church and parish community, that God's love may show forth in our life together:

(Pause for silent prayer).

All: Lord, hear us.

For Pope Francis, Archbishop Jose Gomez, Fr. Richard Sunwoo, and all who serve the Church as pastors, and ministers that they may speak the life giving, loving voice of God:

(Pause for silent prayer).

All: Lord, hear us.

For those who develop and govern matters of public policy, that the dignity and sacredness of every person may be upheld and honored:

(Pause for silent prayer).

All: Lord, hear us.

For those who provide medical, and pastoral care, that they may open our eyes to the wonders of God's love for us:

(Pause for silent prayer).

All: Lord, hear us.

For those who are mentally impaired or physically disabled, that we may be given the grace and wisdom to enable them to use their gifts for the benefit of the entire human family:

(Pause for silent prayer).

All: Lord, hear us.

For those who have died that they may one day awake and arise in the light of Christ:

(Pause for silent prayer).

All: Lord, hear us.

Presider:

Lord of Light, grant us your vision of selfless love that we may make real in our lives the prayers and hopes that you alone see in the depths of our hearts. Hear the prayers we ask of you in the name of Jesus, the healing Christ.

Our Father:

Presider: At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

All:

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.

Amen

Sign of Peace:

Presider: Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you; look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Who live and reign for ever and ever.

All: Amen

Presider:

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All:

And with your spirit.

Presider:

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

(At this time, please offer a moment of silence before the Spiritual Communion is said.)

Spiritual Communion:

All: I wish my Lord, to receive you with the purity, humility and devotion with which your most holy Mother received you, with the spirit and fervor of the saints.

Closing Prayer:

Presider:

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world, illuminate our hearts, we pray, with the splendor of your grace, that we may always ponder what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty and love you in all sincerity. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen