



FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

CYCLE A

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41

GATHERING

(An unlit white pillar candle and a bible open to this week's gospel rest on a table covered with purple cloth. The candle and the bible are surrounded with other symbols of light, e.g., a light bulb, a flash light, a lantern, a photo of the sun or stars, etc.)

This week we focus on Jesus as the light of the world. We reflected last week on the living water of Jesus and how accepting it will bring meaningful change in our lives. Where did you confront a call to change in your life this past week? How did you respond? *(Members share briefly.)*

OPENING PRAYER

(The leader invites members to close their eyes in a time of silent prayer in the presence of God. A selection of instrumental music is played. When the music is complete, the leader invites members to open their eyes and to share briefly an image or thought from their prayer. After members have offered their reflections, the leader invites the community to pray the "Glory Be." The candle is then lit.)

FOCUS QUESTION

Catalan architect, Antoni Gaudí, said, “The light must be just sufficient, neither too much nor too little, because both these extremes are blinding, and blind men do not see.” Describe a time when you were blinded by some extreme.

SCRIPTURE SHARING AND REFLECTION

(The scriptures are read aloud with a pause after each reading. Following a pause after the gospel, the facilitator invites members to mention a word, a phrase or an image from one of the readings that particularly struck them this week. Members then read over the commentary and consider the questions in silence for several minutes before entering into conversation.)

COMMENTARY

Light is perhaps the most divine of all natural phenomena. God created light first. Once created, God separated it from the darkness calling the light *day* and the darkness *night*. In so doing, God created with light the temporal context in which God brought the rest of the world into existence (Gen. 1:3-5). From its primordial moment to this day light shows its divine quality by evoking great wonder through its elusive existence. Light exists simultaneously both as a wave and as a particle. Its electromagnetic velocity is considered unattainable by anything else in the physical universe. The phenomenon of luminosity brings visibility, energy, and life to God’s created world.

As God once used light to create the world and sustain it, so now God uses light to recreate the world and save it. This time, instead of creating the light, God becomes the light. Jesus Christ is the *lumen gentium*, the light of the nations, the light of the world and the light of our lives. By existing simultaneously as divine and as human, Jesus overcomes the separation of day and night and shines on in the darkness (John 1:5). Christ the light penetrates our world, our community and our very person. His rays seek to touch every corner of the universe to bring rebirth.

Like the man born blind, we are anointed by the light of the world. In the divine light from light, we come to see Jesus more and more for who he is. He may at first be just a man named Jesus. Later he may be a prophet. Eventually we see him as the Son of Man, the Christ. We gradually are empowered by courage to acknowledge the Christ as Lord more openly with our words and

with our actions. As we gain clarity in our seeing into the shadows of complexity in our world, we are able to resist resorting to the simplicities of extremes, whether they are religious or political. Ultimately we live a life of freedom and integrity to have the good work of God's will made visible through us. We gain what we may consider unattainable, namely, eternal life.

Physical light, even with its divine qualities, illuminates only our eyes. The divine light of Christ illuminates much more. As disciples, enlightened through our baptism into Christ's dying and rising, we are called to diffuse this light in us through prayer and encounter with scripture and engagement with one another. Then, we are called to radiate Christ's light into all the existing darkness in the world.

Living in the divine light, we grow in the life of freedom and integrity and the good work of doing God's will becomes more and more visible in our lives.

FAITH SHARING AND INTEGRATION

- ◆ How does the word, phrase or image that struck you from this week's scriptures speak to your life or the life of the community, your family or your world these days?
- ◆ In what way have you been in God's spotlight?
- ◆ How have you experienced some darkness in our world? How were you able to move from the darkness to the light?
- ◆ How has the blindness of another hurt you? How has your blindness hurt another?
- ◆ When have you been able to see Christ most clearly?
- ◆ Where in your life would you wish for more light and clarity?

RESPONSE IN ACTION

(The leader poses the question, "What does God ask of you/us in light of our sharing of life and faith this week?" After a few minutes of reflection, the leader invites conversation in response to the question.)

- ◆ Help someone who is blind by reading or driving. Contact the National Federation of the Blind. You may locate the NFB in your area by a

www.nfbct.org to find someone in your area who needs assistance.

- ◆ Recycle old eyeglasses . Bring them to an eyeglass store near you that collects them on behalf of those who cannot afford them.

SENDING FORTH AND CLOSING PRAYER

(Except for the candle, all the lights in the room are turned off. Members sit for a few minute in silent prayer. After a time the lights are turned on and members join in singing. "What Wondrous Love Is This?" (The song may be found on the Internet.)

Leader: Lord God,
source of unfailing light,
you led the man born blind
to the kingdom of light
through the gift of faith in your Son.
Free us
from the false values that surround and blind
us. Set us firmly in your truth,
children of the light forever.
Guide us along the path of right faith,
safe from error, doubt and unbelief,
so that with eyes unsealed
we may come to see you face to face,
for you live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

Adapted from the exorcism of the second scrutiny of
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