

March 22, 2020



Fourth

Sunday of Lent

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."

John 9:39

Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo

(1538-1606)

March 23

In times of crisis, God always surprises the Church with unlikely saints, through whom Christ's light radiates beyond their local communities to illumine the universal Church. Charles Borromeo was such a saint: appointed Archbishop of Milan at twenty-one by his papal uncle, epitomizing the corruption that the reformers condemned, Charles instead inspired a revival that reinvigorated a Church devastated by the Reformation. His less well-known contemporary, Turibius of Mongrovejo, was God's "saintly surprise" in the New World. Spanish-born lawyer, professor, head of the feared Inquisition, Turibius was still a layman when a grateful king appointed him Archbishop of far-off Lima. Once in Peru, however, Turibius was appalled at the abuse of indigenous peoples by the occupying conquistadores—his fellow countrymen—and by the complicity of the clergy. He became the natives' devoted advocate, building churches, schools, hospitals, and the first seminary in the Americas, publishing catechisms and prayerbooks in the native languages he painstakingly mastered. Four hundred years later, whenever Pope Benedict welcomed Latin American bishops to Rome, he always invoked "the shining example of San Toribio."

—Peter Scagnelli, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Charity

If you truly want to help the soul of your neighbor, you should approach God first with all your heart. Ask him simply to fill you with charity, the greatest of all virtues; with it you can accomplish what you desire.

—St. Vincent Ferrer

Light

"Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light" (Ephesians 5:14). We are at the midpoint of our Lenten journey of conversion. As always, God never gives up on us, especially those who have "fallen asleep" along the road to conversion. The most powerful stories of conversion are proclaimed during these final weeks of Lent. They have the power to shake us out of our sleep. Today's Gospel story of the healing of the man born blind exposes the real blindness in the time of Christ—the blindness of the self-righteous religious leaders. In a few weeks, at the Easter Vigil, the Church will proclaim "Christ our Light" as the paschal candle is carried into darkened churches throughout the world. May the darkness of sin that still pervades our lives, communities, and world, be dispelled by the Christ who comes to bring sight to the blind and light to the world. Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

Readings for the Week

Monday:	Is 65:17-21; Ps 30:2, 4-6, 11-13b; Jn 4:43-54
Tuesday:	Ez 47:1-9, 12; Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9; Jn 5:1-16
Wednesday:	Is 7:10-14, 8:10; Ps 40:7-11; Heb 10:4-10; Lk 1:26-38
Thursday:	Ex 32:7-14; Ps 106:19-23; Jn 5:31-47
Friday:	Wis 2:1a, 12-22; Ps 34:17-21, 23; Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30
Saturday:	Jer 11:18-20; Ps 7:2-3, 9bc-12; Jn 7:40-53
Sunday:	Ez 37:12-14; Ps 130:1-8; Rom 8:8-11; Jn 11:1-45 [3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45]

Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	Fourth Sunday of Lent
Monday:	St. Turibius of Mogrovejo
Tuesday:	World Day for Truth Concerning Human Rights Violations
Wednesday:	The Annunciation of the Lord
Friday:	Abstinence



Today's Readings

First Reading — As the prophet Samuel anointed David with oil, the spirit of the LORD rushed upon David (1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a).

Psalm — The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want (Psalm 23).

Second Reading — You who were once darkness are now light in the Lord (Ephesians 5:8-14).

Gospel — The man who had been blind from birth proclaimed: The one called Jesus made clay with his saliva, anointed my eyes with it, and told me to wash (John 9:1-41 [1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38]).

The English translation of the Psalm Responses from Lectionary for Mass © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.

Prayer to End Coronavirus Pandemic

Pope Francis

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.
At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain,
with steadfast faith.

You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.
We are certain that you will provide, so that,
as you did at Cana of Galilee,
joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform ourselves to the Father's will
and to do what Jesus tells us:
He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us,
through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.
Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious
and blessed Virgin.

Dated 3/15/2020



Our Lenten journey continues this Sunday as we hear of Jesus healing a blind man in the Gospel of John. Jesus proclaims himself the light of the world, a light that overcomes darkness and enables a new capacity to see. The man, blind from birth, was able to begin his path to sight by first acknowledging his blindness. We are reminded of God's ongoing invitation to us to journey from blindness to sight. We begin by acknowledging our own capacity for "blind spots," and so open ourselves to uncomfortable truths and to God's healing. We are invited to see beyond appearances, as the reading from Samuel indicates, and to look into the heart of things. We are invited to "live as children of light" as the letter to the Ephesians teaches. Like the man healed from blindness, we may gradually learn to see fully and to follow Jesus.

Healing For Community

It is helpful to observe that our Gospel passage from John, the healing of the blind man, is the first part of a longer episode. When Jesus' words end Chapter 9 in today's passage, he goes on speaking in the discourse on the Good Shepherd in Chapter 10. The healing of the blind man was not only a demonstration of God's power, giving him the physical capacity of sight. It was even more than the awakening of the man's personal faith in Jesus. The image of the Good Shepherd confirms that the man was liberated from the social isolation of his blindness and became a member of Jesus' flock. All of Jesus' powerful actions of healing were intended as gifts,

not only to individuals, but for the building up of the community of faith.

Humility And Action

"Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance, but the LORD looks into the heart." In our first reading, Samuel draws conclusions about who God will choose as king based on his assumptions of what a proper king looks like. But God sees a deeper reality. How easy it is to miss our own blindness. How frequently we are unaware of our own flawed assumptions about others and about ourselves. We often need a deeper humility about the limitations of our perceptions and our convictions.

Yet, as the letter to the Ephesians encourages, there are times to expose the "fruitless works of darkness", to speak out, especially when persons or groups are suffering from abuse or oppression. We are called to live within a tension that these scripture passages convey. We are to seek God's guidance in prayer with genuine openness. We are then to speak and act forcefully against wrongdoing, even as we maintain humility about how much we know, or what is the best action to take. We are called to bring God's wisdom and mercy to all.

Today's Readings: 1 Sam 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6; Eph 5:8-14; Jn 9:1-41 [1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38]

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