

# Fourth Sunday of Lent



## Thanks and Praise for Sight

God our Father,  
you who gave your Son the power  
to cure the man blind from birth,  
we thank you for sight,  
both inner and outer.  
We ask for the grace  
to appreciate more fully  
the sight of a face we love,  
a glowing full moon,  
or the first crocus.  
Awaken, please, our inner eye,  
heal the places where we are blind,  
alert us to new ideas and insights,  
so that we can share the thrill:  
“Now I see!”  
We ask this through the same Christ our  
Lord. Amen.

## Sunday, April 3, 2011 Seeing the Light of the World

Today's Readings: 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41. In today's Gospel story, Jesus, the Light of the World, brings light and sight to a man who has never been able to see. And the man receives something greater than physical sight. In the course of the story, he comes to “see” that his healer is the Lord. This spunky, uneducated man in some ways represents us all, gradually coming to see and live out of the light our Lord offers to us.

The formerly blind man also shows us how to trust. He's so grateful to Jesus that he believes him completely, and he bows in reverence to him. He stands in sharp contrast to the Pharisees, who insist on a limited, rigid interpretation of their tradition. Their blindness keeps them from seeing how God is working in their lives at that moment.

We also have our blind spots. Sometimes, metaphorically, we choose to stay in the dark basement, rather than the light-filled ballroom to which God invites us. If we focus on despair or anxiety, we overlook the light and sight offered to us at every moment.

Jesus anoints the man's eyes with clay, literally, with earth—which God created and proclaimed good, and which heals his blindness. Those baptized at the Easter Vigil will be anointed with oil, like Israel's priests, prophets, and rulers. May we remember our own baptismal anointing and reclaim our gift of light and sight.



# This Week at Home



## Monday, April 4

### Trusting in Something New

Today's reading from Isaiah tells us that God is creating "new heavens and a new earth," a new creation that will bring joy and new life for all. In the Gospel, a royal official begs Jesus to heal his dying son, and when Jesus promises that the child will live, the man trusts Jesus and indeed finds that his son is healed. How difficult is it for us to trust in something wonderful and unimaginable? Saint Isidore, whose optional memorial we celebrate today, was a seventh-century Bishop of Seville, Spain, who trusted in God's promises. Even in the face of marauding armies of tribal people, he kept on founding schools and writing a popular encyclopedia. Martin Luther King Jr., the black civil rights leader who died on this day in 1968, also trusted in "a new earth," which must have seemed an impossible dream. His writing, teaching, and organizing was rooted in a vision of biblical justice. He inspired many to stand with him, and eventually they changed discriminatory laws. Today's Readings: Isaiah 65:17–21; John 4:43–54.

## Tuesday, April 5

### Water from the Temple

Read today's First Reading from Ezekiel alone or as a family or household. Pay close attention to the description of the temple and the water flowing from it. If there are children present, wonder with them about what the water might represent. Is there water flowing in your church? Place a bowl of water on your table at dinner to continue pondering the mysterious vision that the prophet Ezekiel describes. Today's Readings: Ezekiel 47:1–9; John 5:1–16.

## Wednesday, April 6

### Hearing and Believing

As today's Gospel begins, Jesus is speaking of his relationship to his Father. The Jewish leaders accuse him of blasphemy. Believing in the Son's unity with the Father is essential. Jesus says: "anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent

me has eternal life." Lent invites us to hear Christ's voice in the scriptures more often, to believe the Father more firmly, and to draw closer to both Father and Son. Today's Readings: Isaiah 49:8–15; John 5:17–30.

## Thursday, April 7

### Memorial of Saint John Baptist de la Salle

In today's reading from Exodus, we hear God complaining to Moses that the "stiff-necked" people of Israel have fallen back into idolatry. God speaks of a terrible punishment. But Moses changes God's mind, and then returns to try and teach the Israelites how to relate to their God. Today we remember a great teacher and saint of the seventeenth century, John Baptist de la Salle, who founded the Christian Brothers. He gave up a life of ease to found schools for poor boys. Today's Readings: Exodus 32:7–14; John 5:31–47.

## Friday, April 8

### A Lack of Wisdom

Why would someone do evil to the righteous? Today's reading from the book of Wisdom blames wrong thinking and ignorance of God's ways—a lack of wisdom. It goes on to offer interesting insights into the mind of someone bent on violence. What particular righteous man does this passage suggest to you? Today's Readings: Wisdom 2:1a,12–22; John 7:1–2; 10; 25–30.


## Saturday, April 9

### Spring Stroll

Walk outdoors to discover signs of spring. New buds, leaves, and flowers may be appearing. (Depending on where you live, you might need to look deeper to uncover new shoots under melting snow.) Continue paying attention to these signs, because *Lent* means "spring." Your Lenten practices are creating new spiritual growth in you, preparing you to celebrate Christ's Resurrection in a few weeks. Today's Readings: Jeremiah 11:18–20; John 7:40–53.



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 **Keeping the Seasons**  
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