



Fourth Sunday of Lent March 30, 2014

Introductory Rites

Greeting

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: *Amen*

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And with your spirit.*

Introduction and Welcome

Dear Friends: Today the color of the vestment is rose, or pink or violet because it is a Lenten Sunday of joy. It is a Sunday of consolation. *“Laetare”* Sunday. The Church allows the instrumental music to be played today, together with a well-decorated church, to express this joy that anticipates the gift of Easter! Let us therefore welcome one another to our church with joy and consolation. Turn now to each other and say: I welcome you with joy and consolation.

Sunday Liturgy Guide for the Church of the Poor in the Spirit of the New Evangelization

The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, by virtue of Christian baptism, shepherds the people as light that unmask the evil designs of the world.

In identifying the “unchurched” and the “nominal Catholics” and their impact on our Church, the PCP-II says this: (16) “They are the great mass of our Catholic people. There are so many of them because there are not enough priests, religious and other Church personnel to work with them. And the lack of “workers in the vineyard” is due in turn to a lack of Church-going, of catechesis and formation, the very factors that would encourage more vocations of service to the Church. A vicious circle.

(17) The circle is being broken. And it is being broken in those dioceses and parishes where the very “unchurched” have been challenged to form

themselves into little communities of faith and they begin to respond positively. Where such communities are advanced as a Church priority, the likelihood of a more intense participation of the laity, as envisioned by Vatican II, is greater. And if there is vibrancy in their life, one clear reason is that, in the participatory ethic that characterizes them, they are more able to put together the practices of popular piety with the greater use of scripture, real liturgical worship, the building up of a faith community and involvement in social issues.”

Now, can you identify these “unchurched” and “nominal Catholics” in your community? Does a vicious circle still exist in your parish? Or has this vicious circle been broken? How have these once “unchurched” and “nominal Catholics” been integrated into your BEC, and what are they doing now in your community? ■

Penitential Act

P: Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us ask God now to forgive us our sins, for our God is a God of Love and Compassion.

P: You were sent to heal the contrite of heart, Lord, have mercy.

A: *Lord, have mercy.*

P: You came to call sinners, Christ, have mercy.

A: *Christ, have mercy.*

P: You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us, Lord, have mercy.

A: *Lord, have mercy.*

P: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

A: *Amen.*

Collect

P: Let us pray: 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, forever and ever.

C: *Amen.*

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: 1 Sam 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

L: A reading from the first book of Samuel.

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.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

Commentary on 1 Sam 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a:

This account of David being anointed king confirms what has earlier been promised or predicted in I Sam 13:14 and 15:28. God has taken the initiative to choose who should be king, even without consulting the people, unlike in the election of Saul who was chosen by popular acclamation. David is described here as shepherd. This is an imagery of a good leader who takes care of his flock, of his people.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

R: *(1) The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.*

L: 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.*

L: 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.*

L: 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.*

L: Only goodness and kindness follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for years to come.

R: *The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.*

Commentary on Ps 23:

The song presents two main symbolisms: (a) shepherd and (b) host. The Lord is the best shepherd: he leads his flock to where the pasture is green, and the water is freshest. He is in front of the flock leading them to safe paths. He protects his people. As host, he welcomes his guest, the psalmist, into a sumptuous banquet, shaming his enemies. In spite of his enemies, God has chosen him king; he is a man of abundance. Two divine qualities: goodness and kindness are endowed to him. Therefore, he is fit to stay in the house of the Lord!

Second Reading: Rom Eph 5:8-14

L: A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians.

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."

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: *Thanks be to God.*

Commentary on Eph 5:8-14:

In the struggle between darkness and light, light has emerged victorious. Since Christians have shared in the light of Christ, therefore, they become the light for those who live in darkness. Darkness here signifies the kind of city in which the Pauline community of Ephesus lives. In the huge cities of the Roman Empire, moral decadence has set in. Perversions and vices even have contaminated the Christian city-dwellers. But as children of the light, Christians ought to penetrate every nook and cranny of human existence. They do this by their goodness and righteousness or sense of justice and truth. They must unmask the evil motivations of darkness. Victoriously, they will join the Light, with a song that probably comes from their celebration of the sacrament of baptism.

Gospel: John 9:1-41

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And with your spirit.*

P: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

C: *Glory to you, Lord.*

P: 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, 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.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

Commentary on John 9:1-41:

This is John’s catechism on baptism for his community (Alonso-Schoekel). It starts with a miracle that illuminates and transforms, that makes a new creation. Blindness, or any form of human weakness, is not a punishment for sins committed, but is an opportunity to reveal who God is and what He does. Jesus is the light of the world. Jesus teaches with words and deeds; his words explain his deeds, his deeds make real his words. When the blind man is able to see, he gradually recognizes Jesus as the Messiah. Then he is transformed and becomes a new creature so that even the people do not recognize him right away. He is born a new man in God. He does not fit in anymore into the Jewish community. He has to be expelled from

or he has to leave that old community in order to live his being new in Jesus. He has been transformed and became like Jesus. That is why he answers: I am, the phrase which Jesus often uses to identify himself. In this sense, Jesus is now speaking and acting through him: he gives witness to who Jesus is! And the irony of it all, as John demonstrates: the leaders of the Jewish community say they are not blind. To which Jesus replies: precisely because you say you can see, therefore, you are guilty!

Homily: The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, by virtue of Christian baptism, shepherds the people as light that unmasks the evil designs of the world.

Summary of the Sunday Reading Message	Concrete description of the poor people and their situation	Reflection/ Points for reflection/ Call/ Challenge
The Church of the Poor, through the Basic Ecclesial Communities, by virtue of Christian baptism, shepherds the people as light that unmasks the evil designs of the world.	What are the forces within and around your BEC that have evil designs? What are their evil designs and why do they scheme evil things? Were you blinded by their schemes? How has been your experience of exposing evil?	Christians ought to resist being blinded by the designs of selfishness and greed of the world. By clinging to Christ, they are light in the world by their acts of goodness and kindness.

Profession of Faith

A: 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, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary. 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.

Prayers of the Faithful:

P: Dear sisters and brothers, on this Lenten Sunday of joy and consolation, let us bring to our Father in heaven our sadness and sorrows, our hopes and our dreams. Let our response be: Lord, give us the joy of your Kingdom.

R: *Lord, give us the joy of your Kingdom.*

L: Let us pray for the Church: that being a Church of the Poor spread all over the world, she may continue to be the light in the midst of darkness, leading all people, especially the poor and the needy, to Christ, the fulfilment of their

dreams and aspirations. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: *Lord, give us the joy of your Kingdom.*

L: For our Holy Father, Pope Francis I, for the bishops, priests, deacons, for those in consecrated life and for all those who are entrusted with the care and administration of the church as People of God: that they may continue to shepherd the people by pointing to the ways of love, truth, freedom, justice and peace. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: *Lord, give us the joy of your Kingdom.*

L: For world leaders and all those entrusted with governance and administration of the goods of the earth: that they may promote joy in society by providing conditions for the well-being of all, and not the advancement of the few who exploit the many. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: *Lord, give us the joy of your Kingdom.*

L: For all of us: that we will prepare well for the Holy Week and Easter through the support and encouragement that we give to one another, especially to our children and youth, by listening to them and accompanying them to the ways of righteousness and away from perversions and vices. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: *Lord, give us the joy of your Kingdom.*

L: For our beloved dead: that in the forgiveness of their sins, they may find eternal rest in the heart of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us pray to the Lord.

R: *Lord, give us the joy of your Kingdom.*

L: For our special intentions, in the silence of our hearts. (*pause*)... Let us pray to the Lord.

R: *Lord, give us the joy of your Kingdom.*

P: Lord, we know that you are the only Source of true joy. Help us to become instruments of your Joy by being faithful followers and reflectors of Jesus Christ, our Light and Consolation. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R: *Amen.*

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts

P: Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,

C: *Blessed be God forever.*

P: Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

C: *May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.*

Prayer over the Offerings

P: We place before you, with joy, these offerings, which bring eternal remedy, O Lord, praying that we may both faithfully revere them and present them to you, as fitting, for the salvation of all the world. Through Christ our Lord.

C: *Amen.*

Prayer of the Eucharist

P: The Lord be with you.

C: *And with your spirit.*

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: *We lift them up to the Lord.*

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: *It is right and just.*

P: It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our

Lord.

By the mystery of the Incarnation, he has led the human race that walked in darkness into the radiance of the faith and has brought those born in slavery to ancient sin through the waters of regeneration to make them your adopted children.

Therefore, all creatures of heaven and earth sing a new song in adoration, and we, with all the host of Angels, cry out, and without end we acclaim:

A: *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.*

Acclamation

P: The mystery of faith.

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

(Concluding the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest says:)

Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever.

C: *Amen.*

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer

Doxology

C: For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever.

Sign of Peace

P: Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles; Peace ... Who live and reign for ever and ever.

C: *Amen.*

P: The peace of the Lord be with you

always.

C: And with your spirit.

P: Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Breaking of the Bread

A: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world ... grant us peace.

Communion

P: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

A: Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Prayer after Communion

P: Let us pray: 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.

C: Amen.

Final Blessing

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And with your spirit.

P: Bow down your heads and pray for God's blessing: Look upon those who call to you, O Lord, and sustain the weak; give life by your unfailing light to those who walk in the shadow of death, and bring those rescued by your mercy from every evil to reach the highest good. Through Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: And may the blessings of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, + come down upon you and remain with you forever.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Go forth, the Mass is ended.

C: Thanks be to God. ■

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Join Fr. Ben Alforque, MSC of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in **GOSPEL BREAK**, a short yet entertaining and insightful discussion of this Sunday's Gospel on YouTube. Visit **gospelbreak.wordpress.com**. Or scan this QR code with your Smartphone or tablet.

