

A person stands in a forest, silhouetted against a bright sun low on the horizon. Sunlight streams through the trees, creating a warm, golden glow. The person's arms are slightly outstretched, and they appear to be looking towards the light. The scene is peaceful and evocative, symbolizing hope and enlightenment.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT 2020

The light of the world



Fourth Sunday of Lent

From the Readings

The Lord said, 'Come, anoint him, for this is the one.' At this, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him where he stood with his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day on.

1 Samuel 16:12-13

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me, to revive my drooping spirit. *Psalms 23:1-3*

Try to discover what the Lord wants of you,
having nothing to do with the futile works of darkness ... *Ephesians 5:10-11*

'As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world.' Having said this, Jesus spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man, and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (the name means 'one who has been sent'). So he went off and washed and came back able to see ... And they ejected him. Jesus heard they had ejected him, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of man?' 'Sir,' the man replied, 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You have seen him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and worshipped him. *John 9:5-7,34-38*

Reflections

Jesus is light — for 'seeing' in new ways.

Jesus, sometimes my eyes seem as tightly closed as those of a newborn kitten, and I need a hand, your hand, to lead me down the healing road to help me see more clearly. I need a second touch. But spittle, Jesus? I don't know! So earthy, crude, and unacceptable! I thought perhaps you would hold me to your heart, a gentle anointing restoring my sight! And though I'd like to tell you how to heal me, I ask instead for the grace to accept your second touch however it may come.

Macrina Wiedederkehr, Seven Sacred Pauses, 93.





Let your prayer today be a walk. Take nothing on your journey, nothing but a walking stick. Reflect honestly on the gifts you have been given. Find strength in your natural resources. Rejoice in the truth that hidden in the centre of your being is a beautiful simplicity. God wants you to discover and live that simplicity. *Macrina Widerkehr, Seven Sacred Pauses, 58*

Light in Rembrandt's Painting of "The Prodigal Son"

After his many trials at home and at work, Rembrandt shows a special fascination with blind people. As the light in his work interiorises he begins to paint blind people as the real see-ers. As Rembrandt's own life moves towards the shadows of old age, as his success wanes, and the exterior splendour of his life diminishes, he comes more in touch with the immense beauty of the interior life. There he discovers the light that comes from an inner fire that never dies: the fire of love. As he approached death, Rembrandt chose to portray a very still father who recognises his son, not with the eyes of the body, but with the inner eye of his heart.

It seems that the hands that touch the back of the returning son, are the instruments of the father's inner eye. The near-blind father sees far and wide. His seeing is an eternal seeing, a seeing that reaches out to all humanity. It is a seeing that understands the lostness of women and men of all times and places, that knows with immense compassion the suffering of those who have chosen to leave home, who cried oceans of tears as they got caught in anguish and agony. The heart of the father burns with an immense desire to bring his children home. As Father, the only authority he claims for himself is the authority of compassion. From the deep inner place where love embraces all human grief, the Father reaches out to his children. The touch of his hands, radiating light, seeks only to heal. *Henri Nouwen, The Return of the Prodigal Son, 94-95.*





For Thinking and Talking

1. **From these readings and reflections**, what words, phrases and insights stand out for you?
2. **Imagine** what it meant for a blind man to 'see', with his eyes as well as with his heart? What does his experience mean for you?
3. **Express** a hope or intention for the future.

Closing Prayer

I will need help today, God,
to watch my mind and my mouth,
to notice what I say and why I say it.
May I speak with kindness and integrity. Amen.

Joyce Rupp, Inviting God In, 54.



The Prodigal Son, 1669, Rembrandt



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Acknowledgements: Henri Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, London: Darton, Longwood & Todd, 1994; Macrina Wiedederkehr, *Seven Sacred Pauses: Living Mindfully Through the Hours of the Day*, Notre Dame Indiana: Sorin Books, 2008; Joyce Rupp, *Inviting God In*, Notre Dame Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2001.