

READING INTRODUCTIONS FOR 4th. SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A

Traditionally named "*laetare*" Sunday from the Latin word "to rejoice", this day may seem to strike an odd note of relaxation for those striving not to let slip one dot or one stroke from their Lenten penances. Yet the Church permits us a special mid-lent Sunday to counter the perception that Lent is meant to be all doom, gloom and personal affliction. Lent must always be seen as part of the eventual Easter celebration.

FIRST READING

A reading from the firsts Book of Samuel

After the death of Moses and then Joshua, the Israelites in the desert settled for governance by 12 tribal Judges. Although there is no record of misrule, it became clear that such a system was no match for their warring neighbours who had kings. We read that God did not like the idea since He alone was to be their king but he relented and allowed the leading Judge, Samuel, to go out and choose Saul. He was not a success and died in battle so Samuel was sent out again and found David who was to become the model king and forerunner of the Messiah.

SECOND READING

A reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

Today Paul takes up the very common contrast, beloved of St. John and philosophers of his day, of light and darkness. Light comes from God and with it we should try to discern God's will for us by his light dwelling within us. Darkness is the area of sin and shame whereas the light causes us to be illuminated with the light of Christ shining upon us.

GOSPEL READING

A reading from the Holy Gospel according John

Last Sunday, we had the story of the Samaritan to whom Jesus promises "living" water. Today Jesus preaches another parable using the living example of a man born blind whom he heals. Instead of joy all around he finds extraordinary incredulity by the very people who are supposed to be the chief discerners of the truth, namely the Pharisees. Not only is it a story of a wonderful miracles bring new life to an afflicted man but it is principally about the total blindness of heart of those who refuse to believe the obvious.