

'IN THE SCRIPTURES,
BY THE SPIRIT,
MAY WE SEE THE SAVIOURS FACE,
HEAR HIS WORD AND
HEED HIS CALLING,
KNOW HIS LOVE AND
GROW IN GRACE.'

Readings: <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/readings/?feature=sunday>

The link to the readings is a temporary one, it will bring you to the correct readings only for the week leading up to the Sunday in question. (its a copyright thing)

Check

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032220.cfm>
for a different translation of the text

Notes: https://lectorprep.org/lent_04_yrA.html

Gospel

JN 9:1-41

Early Jewish followers of Jesus began to suffer persecution and expulsion from synagogues. Saint John's gospel tried to get the indecisive converts to make their final commitment to Christ. Here John turns an early memory of a cure by Jesus into an extended teaching on conversion and its consequences.

First Reading,

1 Samuel 16:1B, 6-7, 10-13A

For a long time, Israel had been ruled by Judges. The people wanted a king so they could be like other nations. The wise warned against this, and against other tendencies to imitate the pagan nations, but the people insisted. The Lord relented and let them name Saul as their first king. When Saul failed, the Lord prompted Samuel, the last Judge, to designate as the next king an unnamed son of one Jesse of Bethlehem. This passage is about Samuel's journey to find the Lord's chosen one, and the ritual for anointing the new king, which was the ancient way of designating a monarch. It details Samuel's notion of which son is the right one versus God's choice of the unlikely David. (David is so unlikely, he wasn't even summoned to the ceremony at first. The youngest son, he was tending sheep instead.)

Proclaiming It: Before starting the reading, pause and let the congregation settle down, and get silent. This is always good practice, but especially when there's a key phrase in the first sentence of the first reading, like today's "**I have chosen myself a king from among his [Jesse's] sons.**" Say this in such a way that your congregation understands that we're looking for a future king here. If they miss that, nothing that follows will make sense.

Now, tell the story. For one thing, this is the story of Samuel's continuing education in the ways of the Lord. He's already old, a retired Judge (governor, really), and he's lived through the kingship of Saul. So he has some ideas about how things should turn out. So you should make him sound a little puzzled as the Lord rejects seven

apparently fit candidates for the kingship. Then, as Samuel has caught on to the Lord's plan, make him sound resolute as he insists on meeting the most unlikely youngest son.

(The one of Jesse's sons who is named is Eliab, pronounced ee LIE ab.)

At this time every year in Lent of Year A (of the Church's three-year cycle of Sunday readings), we proclaim the gospel passage, John 9: 1-41, which you should also read, about Jesus' cure of the man born blind. The passage from 1 Samuel may be put into the calendar today because of the famous line,

"Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart,"

which resonates with the gospel passage. As you proclaim the passage, then, emphasize that line. Say it slowly and with authority; it may be the most important thing some listeners hear today. The best way to prepare to proclaim the line might be to ponder it now for a few minutes, asking how it has proven true in your own life. If you can do that, your proclamation will carry the authority that the line deserves.

Second Reading

Ephesians 5:8-14

The Christians at Ephesus had been pagans, not Jews, before their conversion to Christ. That prior status is what the author has in mind when he says "you were once in darkness." In its original context, this may have been a catechesis to help converts (and they were all converts) understand the before/after character of the change they accepted in baptism. The expression "**That is why it is said**" (verse 14) indicates a quote from a hymn from an early baptism liturgy. The whole passage extends the light-versus-darkness metaphor. It, too, seems chosen for proclamation today in view of the blindness-versus-sight theme of today's gospel.

Proclaiming It: The phrases of this passage are short and simple (unlike many we've proclaimed on recent Sundays!). So read them slowly and, as usual, try to use contrasting tones of voice when describing the deeds of light versus the deeds of darkness.