

Welcome to **Laetare Sunday**! “**Laetare**” means “**Rejoice**”. In the middle of our somber Lenten journey, the Church hits a “pause” button on penance to remind us of the joy waiting at Easter. Today is a celebration of sight – not just what we see with our eyes, but what we perceive with our souls.

God Sees Differently Than We Do: In our first reading, we see the prophet Samuel looking for a king. He looks at tall, strong, handsome men and thinks, “Surely, this is the One!” But God corrects him with a famous line: “***Humans look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart***”.

We often judge people by their bank accounts, their social status, their success or their looks. We might even judge ourselves by our failures. But God sees the “David” inside us – the kingly potential buried under the surface. This Sunday invites us to ask: “**Lord, help me see people the way You see them**”.

Moving from Darkness to Light: St Paul tells us that although we were once darkness, but now we are “**light in the Lord**”; **therefore, we must live as children of the light**. Think of a dark room where you’re stumbling over furniture. When the light turns on, the room hasn’t changed, but your ability to navigate it has.

Living as “**children of light**” means:

- **Goodness:** Acting with kindness when no one is watching.
- **Justice:** Standing up for what is right.
- **Truth:** Being honest with ourselves and God.

The Miracle of the Man Born Blind: In the Gospel, Jesus performs a messy, beautiful miracle. He spits on the ground, makes clay, and rubs it on a blind man’s eyes. This wasn’t just about fixing physical eyes; it was about a journey of faith.

- **The Neighbors** saw a beggar.
- **The Pharisees** saw a law – breaker (because Jesus healed on the Sabbath).
- **The Man** saw a Savior.

While the “experts” stayed blind because of their pride, the humble beggar gained perfect vision. It reminds us that spiritual blindness – caused by anger, prejudice, or greed – is often harder to cure than physical blindness. We must be willing to say, **“Lord, I am blind; please wash me”**.

Our Shepherd Guides the Way: The Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 23) ties it all together. Even when we walk through the “valley of the shadow of death”, we don’t have to be afraid. Why? Because, we have a Shepherd who knows the way. He doesn’t just give us directions; He walks beside us.

This week, let’s try to **“clean our glasses”** in two ways.

- 1. Heal Personal Blindness:** Ask God to show you your “blind spots”. Are you ignoring someone’s pain? Are you holding a grudge that clouds your judgment?
- 2. Challenge Cultural Blindness:** Our world is often blind to the value of the elderly, the unborn, and the poor. Be the light that notices them.

As we continue our Lenten journey, let’s pray the words of scholar William Barclay: **“God our Father, help us see Christ more clearly, love Him more dearly, and follow him more nearly, day by day”**. Rejoice! The light is coming, and the darkness cannot overcome it.