



**Fourth Sunday of Lent [Laetare]**  
**† Sunday 26th March 2017**

Cycle of Prayer: Candidates for the Sacraments, Wanderers and Penitents  
Keynote: Walk in the light of faith

**First Book of Samuel 16: 1, 6-7, 10-13**

*‘The Lord said to Samuel: “Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem.”* The prophet Samuel is sent to search for the one chosen by God to be the new king of Israel. The proud father Jesse parades his sons – fine young fellows – before the prophet, expecting each one in turn to be the one chosen. Presented with Eliab, even Samuel thought, *‘Surely the Lord’s anointed one stands here before me,’* but the Lord said to Samuel, *‘Take no notice of his appearance or his height for I have rejected him; God does not see as man sees; man looks at appearances but the Lord looks at the heart.’* Eventually of the eight sons, just one, the youngest, remains in the fields looking after the sheep, so Jesse sends for his youngest son, David, *‘a boy of fresh complexion with fine eyes and pleasant bearing. The Lord said, “Come, anoint him, for this is the one.”* At this Samuel, took the horn of oil and anointed him... and the spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day on.’ God doesn’t always choose whom we might expect to be his chosen and trusted servants. Often the most unlikely people will be filled with the grace of the Spirit, and do great things for God.

**Responsorial Psalm 22 [23]** – A psalm of confidence in Lord as Good Shepherd

**Letter of Paul to the Ephesians 5: 8-14**

*‘You were darkness once,’* says the apostle, *‘but now you are light in the Lord, be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness, right living and truth.’* We may reflect in this Lenten season on what we still have to do to conform to the will of God. *‘Try to discover what the Lord wants of you, having nothing to do with the futile works of darkness.’* We know that people are often ashamed of the things done in secret, *‘ashamed even to speak of (them)’*, says the apostle. Then quoting a possible fragment of an early Christian hymn, Paul urges the people of Ephesus, *‘Wake up from your sleep, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’* This mid-point of Lent is an opportunity for us to wake up!

**Gospel according to John 9: 1-41**

*‘As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth.’* Posed with the question of whose sin it was that had caused this blindness, Jesus says, *‘he was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him.’* Then, *‘Jesus spat on the ground,’* the evangelist tells us, *‘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” (a name that means “sent”).* So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight.’ This man – who was well known to people because of his begging – tells the story of his healing, and the Pharisees drive the man away. When Jesus catches up with him again, he asks *‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’* *‘Sir,’* the man says, *‘tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.’* Jesus said, *‘you are looking at him, he is speaking to you,’* the man said, *‘Lord, I believe.’* That is the point; faith enlightens our purpose in life.