Gathering Rite

(Stand) - All make the Sign of the Cross:
Leader: + In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
All: Amen

Leader: Trusting in the mercy of God, let us call to mind our sins.
All: I confess to almighty God, and to you my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, (striking your breast) through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brother brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God. Amen.

Leader: Let us pray: O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonder way, grant we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.
All: Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

(Be Seated)
Leader: A Reading from the first Book of Samuel (1 Samuel 16:1B, 6-7, 10-13A)

The LORD said to Samuel: “Fill your horn with oil, and be on your way. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen my king from among his sons.” As Jesse and his sons came to the sacrifice, Samuel looked at Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is here before him.” But the LORD said to Samuel: “Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the LORD looks into the heart.” In the same way Jesse presented seven sons before Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any one of these.”

Then Samuel asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” Jesse replied, “There is still the youngest, who is tending the sheep.” Samuel said to Jesse, “Send for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until he arrived here.” Jesse sent and had the young man brought to them. He was ruddy, a youth handsome to behold and making a splendid appearance. The LORD said, “There—anoint him, for this is the one!” Then Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed David in the presence of his brothers; and from that day on, the spirit of the LORD rushed upon David.

The Word of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God.
**Leader:** The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want. (*Psalm 23:1-3A, 3B-4, 5,6*)

**All:** The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

**Leader:** The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul.
**All:** The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

**Leader:** He guides me in right paths for his name’s sake.
Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side
With your rod and your staff that give me courage.
**All:** The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

**Leader:** You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
**All:** The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

**Leader:** Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for years to come.
**All:** The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

**Leader:** A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians (*Ephesians 5:8-14*)

Brothers and sisters: You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness; rather expose them, for it is shameful even to mention the things done by them in secret; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it says: “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

The Word of the Lord.
**All:** Thanks be to God.

*(Stand)*

**Leader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to John (*John 9:1-41*)

**All:** Glory to You, O Lord.

As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him.

We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, “Go wash in the Pool of Siloam” —which means Sent—. So he went and washed, and came back able to see.

His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, “Isn’t this the one who used to sit and beg?” Some said, “It is, but others said, “No, he just looks like him.” He said, “I am.” So they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?” He replied, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my
eyes and told me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went there and washed and was able to see.” And they said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I don’t know.”

They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees. Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a sabbath. So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. He said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see.” So some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a sinful man do such signs?” And there was a division among them. So they said to the blind man again, “What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”

Now the Jews did not believe that he had been blind and gained his sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained his sight. They asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How does he now see?” His parents answered and said, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. We do not know how he sees now, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him, he is of age; he can speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone acknowledged him as the Christ, he would be expelled from the synagogue. For this reason his parents said, “He is of age; question him.”

So a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, “Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner.” He replied, “If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see.” So they said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?” They ridiculed him and said, “You are that man’s disciple; we are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is from.”

The man answered and said to them, “This is what is so amazing, that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him. It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything.” They answered and said to him, “You were born totally in sin, and are you trying to teach us?” Then they threw him out.

When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered and said, “Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “I do believe, Lord,” and he worshiped him. Then Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind.” Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not also blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, ‘We see,’ so your sin remains.

The Gospel of the Lord.
All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.
Questions for discussion or reflection:

1) "Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the LORD looks into the heart." The Lord says this to Samuel as he searches out the next king of Israel. What does God see in you, or those you know, to better help you or them serve God’s kingdom?

2) "Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth." Saint Paul mentions this to the Christians of ancient Ephesus. What darkness is present in our world today? How can we bring light to this darkness?

3) The man born blind went from not knowing Jesus, being in darkness, to professing his belief in Jesus as the Son of Man. How has your faith grown from darkness to light, or how can it grow during this time of Lenten isolation?

Leader: We join the Church in professing our common faith:

All: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there He will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.
Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leader: We are children of light and so we strive to make the needs of the world visible. Let us pray for all those in need.

Leader: For the Church; that we may bring to light whatever is hidden in darkness and heal the wounds that have gone unnoticed. We pray to the Lord.
All: Lord, hear our prayer. (Repeat after each petition.)

Leader: For government leaders; that they may continually work to ensure the well-being of the most vulnerable in their care. We pray to the Lord.
Leader: For all who are ill, particularly those with coronavirus; that they will be healed and restored to their families and communities. We pray to the Lord.

Leader: For growth in our faith; that God’s love for us may be a light for us as we face our daily challenges and draw us into a deeper relationship with God. We pray to the Lord.

Leader: For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions, spoken and unspoken. We pray to the Lord.

Leader: Luminous God, Listen to our prayer and lead us out of darkness. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

**Spiritual Communion**

*Those who are unable to share in the Eucharist may make an act of spiritual communion, expressing their desire for the sacrament.*

As Pope St. John Paul II reminded us, using the words of St. Teresa of Jesus: “When you do not receive communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed on you.” The following prayer, by St. Alphonsus Liguori, may be used to make an act of spiritual communion:

All: My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire you with all my heart. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already in my heart and unite myself to you completely. Please do not let me ever be separated from you.

**Concluding Rite**

Leader: Let us pray: Look upon those who call to you, O Lord, and sustain the weak; give life by your unfailing light to those who walk in the shadow of death, and bring those rescued by your mercy from every evil to reach the highest good. Through Christ our Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross as the leader prays:*

Leader: + May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.