

MARCH 26, 2017



FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT



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

PSALM 23:1-3A, 3B-4, 5, 6

EPHESIANS 5:8-14

JOHN 9:1-41 OR 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

REFLECTION

Today, throughout the Church, the elect (adults who are in the final weeks of preparing to receive Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil) experience a ritual known as the scrutiny. The scrutiny is a ritual of strengthening and helps these adults move from darkness into light. Perhaps you'll witness a scrutiny when you go to Mass today. One of the scrutiny prayers says: "Free these elect from the false values that surround and blind them. Set them firmly in your truth, children of the light for ever" (Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults, 168). Since the scrutiny takes place within the midst of the gathered Christian community, it is a communal experience. Those of us who are already initiated Catholics are invited to witness to those who are undergoing the scrutiny, and we are also invited to reflect more deeply upon our own baptismal promises, to walk as children of the light.



The great gospel singer Mahalia Jackson once said, "Blues are the songs of despair, but Gospel songs are the songs of hope" (Mahalia Jackson's Obituary, *New York Times*, January 28, 1972). Check out Aretha Franklin's version of the gospel song, "Walk in the Light."

ACTION

Even in a world in which there is much darkness, we can make a profound difference in our communities by spreading light to those around us. Look at the communities of which you are a member: your family, school, neighborhood, parish, clubs, or teams. What are some concrete ways in which you can spread light to each of the communities of which you are an important and valued member? Sometimes even a simple gesture of love can make a huge difference in the life of someone who is struggling.

JOURNALING QUESTIONS

● Identify someone you know who is experiencing darkness in his or her life. What can you do for that individual to bring some light to his or her world, to help dispel some of the darkness? How might you be able to be a beacon of hope and light for others?