

4TH WEEK OF LENT = MARCH 22 - 28, 2020

SUNDAY:

1st Reading: **1 Samuel 16: 1b, 6-7, 10-13a**

Res. Psalm: **23: 1-3a, 3b-4, 5,6.**

2nd Reading: **Ephesians 5: 8 - 14**

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

INTRODUCTION: The Fourth Sunday of Lent is known as "Laetare (Rejoice) Sunday," expressing the Church's joy in anticipation of the Resurrection of our Lord. Today's readings both remind us that it is God who gives us proper vision in body as well as in soul and instruct us that we should be constantly on our guard against spiritual blindness.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS SUMMARIZED:

By describing the anointing of David as the second king of Israel, the first reading, taken from the First Book of Samuel, illustrates how blind we are in our judgments and how much we need God's help.

In the second reading, St. Paul reminds the Ephesians of their new responsibility as children of light *to live as children of the light, producing every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth.*"

In today's Responsorial Psalm, (Ps 23), we celebrate the care of God, our Good Shepherd, who keeps us safe in the darkness of this world.

Presenting the miracle of Jesus' giving of sight to a man born blind, today's Gospel teaches us the necessity of opening the eyes of our mind by Faith, and warns us that those who assume they see the truth are often blind, while those who acknowledge their blindness are given clear vision. In this episode, the most unlikely person, namely the beggar born blind, receives the light of Faith in Jesus, while the religion-oriented, law-educated Pharisees remain spiritually blind. To live as a Christian is to see, to have clear vision about God, about ourselves and about others. Our Lenten prayers and sacrifices should serve to heal our spiritual blindness so that we can look at others, see them as children of God and love them as our own brothers and sisters saved by the death and Resurrection of Jesus.

ANECDOTE

"Lead kindly Light": Video= (<https://youtu.be/3j2hBSgZMrw>) St. John Henry Cardinal Newman was a professor at Oxford University. When he was an Anglican priest, along with the other scholars, he started the Oxford movement. When he was thirty-two years old, his health was bad, and he took a break from his writings and went to Europe to recuperate. But unfortunately, he contracted a deadly fever. He wanted to return to England, but no transportation was available. As he waited, his life became lonely and tedious; he was experiencing great physical and emotional despair. It is then that he penned a beautiful hymn asking God for light: *"Lead, kindly Light, amid th'encircling gloom, Lead Thou me on; The night is dark, and I am far from home; Lead thou me on: Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see The distant scene-one step enough*

for me." In his confusion and distress, Newman prayed to the God of Light to lead him from darkness to light, from confusion to certainty, and from sickness to health. God heard his prayer and led him home safely. In 1845, he was converted to the Roman Catholic faith. [John Rose in *John's Sunday Homilies*; quoted by Fr. Botelho.]

SCRIPTURE EXPLANATIONS:

First reading: I Sam 16:1a, 6-7, 10-13a explained: For a long time, Israel had been ruled by Judges. Samuel was the last of these Judges, and towards the end of his life he had more or less succeeded in forming a loose confederation among the twelve tribes of the Israelites. But the people were displeased with the lack of unity and political security. The pagan nations which surrounded them were ruled by kings who led them to battle and who organized their territories on a sound, political basis. In spite of the Lord's warning and the wise advice of the elders, the people demanded a king so that they could be like other nations. Finally, the Lord granted them Saul as their first king (1030 BC). Though successful in many battles, Saul offended God, and the kingship was taken from him. The Lord then prompted Samuel, the last Judge in Israel, to go to Bethlehem to anoint the next king. Today's passage shows us Samuel's journey to find the Lord's chosen one and the ritual for anointing the new king. As an old and experienced judge who had studied how the first king (Saul) had failed, Samuel had his own ideas about whom God would choose. But God chose the most unlikely candidate, namely, David, the shepherd boy, the youngest son of Jesse. The reason He gave Samuel for this choice was: "*Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance, but the Lord looks into the heart.*"

The second Reading: Eph 5:8-14 explained: The whole passage extends the light-versus-darkness metaphor, leading to the blindness-versus-sight theme of today's Gospel. For Paul, Baptism is "*participation in the death and Resurrection of Jesus*" (Rom 6:3-4) and "*clothing with Christ*" (Gal 3:27). In today's reading, taken from his letter to the Ephesians, Paul echoes Isaiah (26:19; 60:1), saying that Baptism is also an "*awakening and living in the light*" – that is, Christ: "*Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.*" That is why in the early Greek-speaking Church, Baptism came to be known as *photismos* meaning "an illumination or bath in light." Hence, Paul reminds Christians of their new responsibility as children of light: "*You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of the light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.*" The Benedictine Bible scholar, Ivan Havener explicates today's passage from Paul's letter to the Ephesians thus: "The readers of this letter were once Gentiles without Christ and were darkness itself, but now as Gentiles in the Lord, they have become light. Their new identity as children of light requires that they live in a different way. The fruit produced by their light-life is all goodness, righteousness, and truth, considering what is pleasing to the Lord. Therefore, instead of participating in the unproductive works of darkness, they should condemn such deeds."

GOSPEL EXEGESIS:

The paradox of blindness. The healing described in today's Gospel occurred when Jesus came to Jerusalem with his Apostles to participate in the feast of Tabernacles or the festival of tents (*Sukkoth*). As part of the celebration of Sukkot, four huge golden four-branched candelabras were set up and lit in the courts of the Temple – each was 50 cubits (=75 feet) high. The Mishnah says that "there was not a courtyard in all of Jerusalem" that did not gleam with the light from

the Temple menorahs when they were lit for Sukkot. The healing of the blind man, told so dramatically in today's Gospel, brings out the mercy and kindness of Jesus, "the light of the world." Isaiah prophesied, and the Jewish people of that era believed, that when the Messiah came, he would heal blindness and other diseases. The type of blindness which we now call ophthalmic conjunctivitis was very common in Biblical times. Jesus gave to the blind beggar not only his bodily eyesight but also the light of Faith. This story also shows how the stubborn pride and prejudice of the Pharisees prevented them from seeing in the humble "*Son of Man*" the long-expected Messiah, and that made them incapable of recognizing the miracle. He begins by identifying Jesus as "a man." Questioned further by the Pharisees, he declares that the man who healed him is a Prophet. When the parents of the blind man convinced them that their son had been born blind, the Pharisees argued that the healer was a "sinner," because the miracle had been performed on the Sabbath. But the cured man insisted that Jesus, his healer, must be a man from God, and they excommunicated him from Temple worship. When Jesus heard this, He sought and found the man He had healed, and asked him, "*Do you believe in the Son of Man?*" the man answered, "*Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?*" In response to Jesus, "*You have seen Him, and the One speaking with you is He,*" the now-sighted man said, "... '*I do believe, Lord,*' and he worshipped Him." Fr. Harrington S.J. comments, "The blind man's progress in spiritual sight reminds us that we need God's grace and revelation to move toward sharper spiritual vision."

Blindness and Baptism: In the context of the Lenten RCIA scrutinies, the Church challenges us to see this man's journey from darkness to light as a paradigm for our own spiritual lives – from the darkness of doubt to belief (for catechumens preparing for Baptism); from the darkness of sin to the light of repentance, mercy and freedom (for those of us already baptized, who are called to renew our Baptismal promises, and to "own" our Baptism more consciously). From earliest times, today's Gospel story has been associated with Baptism. Just as the blind man went down into the waters of Siloam and came up whole, so also believers who are immersed in the waters of Baptism come up spiritually whole, totally healed of the spiritual blindness with which all of us are born. Raymond Brown comments that in the lectionaries and liturgical books of the early Church, there developed the practice of three examinations before one's Baptism. These correspond to the three interrogations of the man born blind. When the catechumens had passed their examinations, and were judged worthy of Baptism, the Gospel book was solemnly opened and the ninth chapter of John was read, with the confession of the blind man, "I do believe, Lord," serving as the climax of the service. Paintings on the walls of the catacombs of Rome portray Jesus healing the man born blind as a symbol of Holy Baptism. One of the writings from that time says: "*Happy is the Sacrament of our water, in that, by washing away the sins of our earthly blindness, we are set free unto eternal life.*" The early Christians looked at their Baptism as leaving behind blindness and darkness and stepping into the glorious light of God. In other words, they realized that their becoming Christians and then continuing as followers of Christ, was indeed a miracle - as great as, if not greater than, the healing of the physical blindness of the man in the Gospel today.

The spiritual blindness of the Pharisees: The Pharisees suffered from spiritual blindness. They were blind to the Holy Spirit. They had the externals of religion but lacked the spirit of Jesus' love. They were also blind to the suffering and pain right before their eyes. They refused to see pain and injustice. There was no compassion in their hearts. In short, they were truly blind both to the Holy Spirit *and* to the human misery around them. "The blind man's progress in

spiritual sight is paralleled by the opponents' descent into spiritual blindness." (Fr. Harrington). Here is a contrast between those who know they are blind and those who claim to see. According to these blind Pharisees, Jesus, by healing the blind man doubly broke the Sabbath law, which forbade works of healing, and also kneading which was involved in making clay of spittle and dust. Raymond Brown adds a third and fourth reason that increased the seriousness of what Jesus had done: in the Jewish tradition, "there was an opinion that it was not permitted to anoint an eye on the Sabbath," and "one may not put fasting spittle on the eyes on the Sabbath." So, they concluded, "*The man who did this cannot be from God, because he does not obey the Sabbath law.*"

Spiritual blindness of modern Pharisees: Although the Pharisees have long since disappeared from history, there are still many among us who are blinded by the same pride and prejudice. Spiritual blindness is very common in modern times. Perhaps, the most awful disease in our country today is spiritual blindness. Such blindness refuses to see the truths of God's revelation. This blindness refuses even to admit that God or Christ exists. In their pride, the spiritually blind claim that everything ends with death and that there is no life after death. They propagate their errors and accuse believers of childish credulity and folly. They ignore the gifts of the intellect we all possess. God's revelation through Christ informs us that there is a future life awaiting us in which our spiritual faculties and our transformed bodies will be fully and fittingly glorified. According to Pope Benedict XVI, the miracle of the healing of the blind man is a sign that Christ wants not only to give us sight, but also to open our interior vision, so that our Faith may become ever deeper and we may recognize Him as our only Savior. He illuminates all that is dark in life and leads men and women to live as "children of the light"

LIFE MESSAGES:

1) We need to allow Jesus to heal our spiritual blindness. Physiologically, the "blind-spot" is the part of our eye where vision is not experienced. It is the spot where the optic nerve enters the eyeball. A blind spot in a vehicle is an area around the vehicle that cannot be directly observed by the driver. In real life, we all have blind-spots -- in our marriages, our parenting, our work habits, and our personalities. We often wish to remain in the dark, preferring darkness to light. It is even possible for the religious people in our day to be like the Pharisees: religious in worship, in frequenting the Sacraments, in prayer-life, in tithing, and in knowledge of the Bible -- but blind to the poverty, injustice and pain around them. Let us remember, however, that Jesus wants to heal our blind spots. We need to ask Jesus to remove from us the root causes of our blindness, namely, self-centeredness, greed, anger, hatred, prejudice, jealousy, addiction to evil habits and hardness of heart. Let us pray with the Scottish Bible scholar William Barclay, "God our Father, help us see Christ more clearly, love him more dearly and follow him more nearly."

2) We need to get rid of cultural blindness. Our culture also has blind-spots. Often it is blind to things like love, happiness, marriage, and true, committed sexual love in marriage. Our culture has become anesthetized to the violence, the sexual innuendo, and the enormous suffering of the world around us. Our culture, our media, our movies and our values, are often blind as to what it means to love selflessly and sacrificially. Our culture, in spite of scientific proofs, is blind to the reality that life begins at the moment of conception, and it callously promotes abortion. We continue to advance destructive practices such as embryonic stem-cell

research, homosexual “marriages,” euthanasia, and human cloning, and we refuse to see the consequences of godless behavior on human society. In the name of individual rights, the radical left in our society decries any public demonstration of religious beliefs and practices, or the public appearance of traditional values, questioning the substance of family values. The radical right, on the other hand, decries the immorality of our times, without lifting a finger to help the poor and the underprivileged and without ever questioning unjust foreign policies and wars. This cultural blindness can only be overcome as each one of us enters the living experience of having Jesus dwelling within us and within others, through personal prayer, meditative reading of the Bible and a genuine Sacramental life.

3) We need to pray for clear vision: Peter Marshall, the former chaplain to the United States Congress used to pray, *"Give us clear vision that we may know where to stand and what to stand for, because unless we stand for something, we shall fall for anything."* Today's Gospel challenges our ability to see clearly. Do we see a terrorist in every member of a particular religion? Do we see people who are addicted to drugs as outcasts and sinners? Do we fail to see God at work in our lives because He has shown us no miracles? Jonathan Swift said, "Vision is the art of seeing things invisible." Let us remember that this gift belongs to those who can see the good hidden in the kernels of suffering and of failure. It resides in those who never give up hope. Let us pray for the grace to see and experience the presence of a loving and forgiving God.

4) Let us not allow the world and Satan to blind us so that we forget our real identity and call – that we have been created by God and bought with the blood of Jesus; that we have been adopted as God's chosen children; and so that our role is to become God's representatives in our community and our world. We are called to stand out by the way we show love and concern for others. We are called to promote justice and peace; to set an example of what it means to live according to God's way. We are called to discipleship – that means a disciplined life of prayer and the study of God's Word, worship with our fellow Christians and standing out in the crowd (even though that may be difficult to do when it means sticking up for those who are being wronged and confessing that Christ in our lives does make a difference. It's so easy to miss the point of what it means to be a Christian, and we end up “blending in” and fail to be a positive and powerful influence to bring about change in people's lives and our world. Lent is a good time to take stock of how we are affected by this blindness, to see just how blind we have been to Jesus and His call to discipleship, and to realise how often we have preferred to stay blind. Lent is a good time to renew our vision and fix our eyes again on the Saviour who came so that we can be assured of forgiveness for such blindness, for the times when Jesus has come to us through his word and we have been too blind to see him calling us to action.

WEEKDAYS:

March 23 Monday (St. Turibius of Mogrovejo, Bishop): In 4:43-54: *USCCB video reflections:*
<https://youtu.be/QVIMCzgp2AQ?list=PLpTzvCOJa7DAoMqHc4moKtTJSI6gsth32>

The context: According to John's Gospel, after facing rejection by his hometown, Nazareth, Jesus went to Jerusalem in Judea for the Passover feast. From Jerusalem, Jesus returned to Galilee and to his headquarters, Capernaum, where people received him as a miracle-working

preacher and prophet. Today's Gospel describes how Jesus did a long-distance (telepathic) healing for the dying son of an official employed in the royal court of king Herod. Jesus was preaching at Cana, twenty miles away from Capernaum. Herod's officer came on horseback from Capernaum to Cana urgently seeking Jesus' presence for the healing of his dying son. He was desperate enough to swallow his pride and make a public request to a wandering preacher for this healing. Jesus' critical comment on the lack of belief in the Pharisees did not discourage the official. With expectant Faith he pleaded with Jesus, reminding him of the seriousness of the illness. So, Jesus told him, "*Go; your son will live.*" With trusting Faith in the assurance Jesus had given him, the officer rushed back toward his house. On the way there, he received the good news that his son had been healed at the very time Jesus gave his assurance. The officer was so grateful that he and the other members of his family accepted Jesus as the promised Messiah without fearing the ridicule of fellow-officers and friends.

Life message: 1) Miraculous healings can take place in our lives, too, if we approach Jesus the healer with true humility, trusting Faith, earnest prayer and the willingness to surrender ourselves to God's will. We have the unfailing word of Jesus to rely on, nothing less.

March 24 Tuesday: Jn 5:1-16: *USCCB video reflections:*
<http://www.usccb.org/bible/reflections/index.cfm>

The context: The Jews had three major feasts – the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Pentecost. Although only adult male Jews living within a 15 mile-radius of Jerusalem were bound to participate in the Passover feast, Jesus went to Jerusalem as a practicing Jew. Today's Gospel passage describes how Jesus healed a paralyzed man who had been lying near the "Probatia" pool of Bethesda (also called Bethzatha), for 38 years, hoping for a healing when the water was miraculously stirred by an angel. Before granting the healing, Jesus asked the paralytic if he wanted to be healed. The man expressed his intense desire for healing and confessed his inability to crawl to the pond in time. At once, Jesus gave the healing command, "*Take up your pallet, and walk,*" and the man obeyed. The Pharisees sternly told the healed man that he shouldn't be carrying his mat as that the day was the Sabbath. The man responded that his healer had told him to but was unable to identify Jesus as that healer when they asked. Later, when Jesus caught up with former paralytic in the Temple and warned him, "*See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befall you!*" the former paralytic recognized that it was Jesus who had healed him and reported the fact to the Jews who had earlier questioned him about carrying his mat.

Life message: 1) We too will experience miracles in our lives when we approach God with trusting Faith in His power to do the impossible and in His mercy for His children. But we need to express our desire to Him with persevering and fervent prayers.

March 25 Wednesday (The Annunciation of the Lord): (Lk 1: 26-38: *USCCB video reflections:*
<http://www.usccb.org/bible/reflections/index.cfm>

The context: Today's Gospel tells us the story of the Annunciation, explaining how God began to keep the promise He had made to King David through the prophet Nathan, that David's descendant would rule the world in an everlasting Kingdom.

The angel's salutation to Mary: "*Hail, full of grace,*" reminds us of God's words to Moses at the burning bush (Ex 3:12), and the angel's salutation to Gideon, (Jgs 6:12). Mary is described as "*full of grace,*" filled with God's favor and graciousness. She is the new Ark, a tent and temple. God is literally and physically in her, and, thus, she is the greater House of God promised to David. Mary's question, "*How can this be, since I am a virgin?*" is natural. That is why the angel reminds Mary, "*Nothing is impossible with God.*" The Lord God will "empower" her ("*the Spirit will come upon you*"), and "protect" her ("*overshadow you*"). In Luke's narrative, Gabriel points out that the Child would not only be a distant grandson of David -- he would be God's own Son: "*He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.*" Mary does not require confirmation but responds in Faith. She agrees to carry out the Word Gabriel has addressed to her. Since Mary is really a true hearer and doer of the Word of God, she immediately makes a response with faith and trust. Mary thus became the virgin-mother who fulfills Isaiah 7:14 in a way that Isaiah could not have imagined. She is united with her son in carrying out the will of God (Psalm 40:8-9; Hebrews 10:7-9; Luke 1:38). The Annunciation touches both the Good News that God has become one like us so that we might become as God is, and the greater news that God, in the person of Jesus, has "paid the price" for achieving this end. When we pray the "Angelus" prayer three times a day, we gratefully remember the great gift of God's Incarnation. When we pray the Rosary, we refer to the Incarnation fifty-three times -- each time we pray the "Hail Mary" -- and the first of the "Joyful mysteries" is the Annunciation, the Incarnation of Our Lord.

Life message: 1) We need to be humble instruments in the hand of God, trusting in His power and goodness, and Mary shows how an ordinary human being can reflect God in the ordinary circumstances of life. St. Augustine reminds us that God who created us without our permission cannot save us without our active cooperation. Hence, let us cooperate in the fulfillment of God's plan for us with Mary's trusting Faith and humility, through which she brought Jesus to the world, giving Him flesh and blood. Can we also bring Jesus to others in our day-to-day lives? Like Mary who brought God to us as Jesus our Savior, it is our duty to carry Jesus and bring him to the lives of others around us in love, mercy, forgiveness and service. "Let the soul of Mary be in each one of you to magnify the Lord. Let the spirit of Mary be in each one to exult in Christ." (St. Ambrose).

March 26 Thursday: Jn 5:31-47: *USCCB video reflections:*
<http://www.usccb.org/bible/reflections/index.cfm>

The context: In today's Gospel passage, Jesus defends His Messianic claims. The Jews demanded proofs for Jesus' Messianic claims, quoting Dt 19:15 which requires two or three witnesses to substantiate a person's claims. Hence, Jesus presents four witnesses who approved His Messianic and Divine claims: John the Baptist, his own miracles, his Heavenly Father, and the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament.

- 1) John the Baptist, whom many Jews considered a prophet, bore witness to Jesus as the "Lamb of God" and the Holy One whose paths he had come to prepare.
- 2) The miracles Jesus worked could only have been done by the power of God his Father.

3) God the Father attested to the Divinity of Jesus at Jesus' Baptism (cfr. Jn 1:31-34); at the Transfiguration (cfr. Matthew 17:1-8), and later, in the presence of the whole crowd (cfr. John 12:28-30).

4) The books of the Old Testament, namely the Law and the Prophets, bear testimony to Jesus' Divine and Messianic claims. It was the Spirit of God Who prompted the prophets of the Old Testament to write their Messianic prophecies. Then Jesus identifies three obstacles which prevented the Jews from recognizing him as the Messiah and Son of God: 1) their lack of love of God, 2) their striving after human glory, and 3) their prejudiced interpretation of Sacred texts and lack of faith in Moses and the prophets.

Life message: When we have doubts about Faith and the Church's teachings we need to 1) read the Bible with trusting Faith;

2) pray for an increase of Faith; 3) learn the teachings of the Church, starting with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the official documents of the Church; 4) accept the mysteries of our Faith, relying on the Divine Authority and veracity of Jesus; and

5) examine how strong our own Christian testimony is. Does our life reflect the light of Christ so much that it brings light to the darkness in others?

March 27 Friday: Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30: *USCCB video reflections:*

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/reflections/index.cfm>

The context: Today's Gospel passage describes Jesus' secret journey to Jerusalem to participate in the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths), amid rumors of his possible arrest. But Jesus courageously made his public appearance in the crowd in Jerusalem and started teaching in the Temple. Naturally, people started wondering why the authorities did not arrest him.

Jesus' Messianic claim and the Jewish reaction: Jesus made two unique and seemingly blasphemous claims. 1) He claimed that he was the Messiah, God's Anointed One. 2) Jesus made the additional claim that only he knew God as He is because Jesus had come from God. By this claim Jesus contradicted the Jewish belief that they had the perfect and final revelation of God given through Moses and the prophets. In addition, Jesus' claim to be the Messiah, and the "Son of Man" prophesied by Daniel, with exclusive and intimate knowledge of God was, they thought, nothing but blasphemy. The Jews argued that a mere carpenter-turned-wandering-preacher from Nazareth could not be the Messiah because nobody was supposed to know where the Messiah would come from. According to Jewish belief, the Messiah would emerge quite unexpectedly from Mount Olivet, cross the Kedron Valley, enter the city of Jerusalem, be anointed by Elijah the prophet, take possession of the City and the Temple and establish His Messianic kingdom.

Life messages: 1) Like the Jews, we, too, can be prejudiced and occasionally refuse to accept and follow the teachings of the Church. We need to have the humility to honor the teaching authority of the Church and its guidance by the Holy Spirit. 2) We need to accept Jesus as our Lord and personal Savior, experience him through prayer and the Sacramental life and surrender our lives to him. 3) Like the Jews who expected the surprise appearance of a super-human Messiah we, too, show the tendency to seek God only in miraculous and extraordinary events, ignoring His presence within us and in everyone around us.

March 28 Saturday: Jn 7:40-53:

USCCB video reflections: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/reflections/index.cfm>

The context: Today's Gospel describes the reaction of the people, the Pharisees, the Temple police, and Nicodemus, the Sanhedrin member, to Jesus' public claim to be the promised *Messiah* and the "*Son of Man*" prophesied by Daniel.

The common people say that Jesus probably is the expected Messiah because of His authoritative teaching and authentic miracles. But the Pharisees, the Scribes and the Jewish priests can only see Jesus as a Galilean from Nazareth, and they argue from Scripture that the real Messiah must be born in David's family in Bethlehem. The Temple police, whom they have sent to arrest Jesus, report that they have not arrested Jesus because, "nobody ever spoke like Him." They are impressed by Jesus' wisdom and authoritative teaching. Nicodemus, a prominent member of the supreme council of the Jews defends Jesus, demanding that the Sanhedrin give Jesus a fair trial before they have Him punished for blasphemy on unfounded claims.

Life messages: 1) We believe in Jesus' teachings based on His authority as God. We believe in the Sacred Scriptures based on the teaching authority Jesus gave to Peter and his successors. Since Jesus and His Apostles believed in the Old Testament Books as the inspired word of God, and since the Church teaches the same thing, we, too, believe them to be the real word of God, and we follow the instructions given in the Bible. Hence, we need to follow the Bible as the guide of our Christian life and accept the traditional interpretation given to the word of God by the teaching authority in the Church.

2) Today we Christians are also "a sign of contradiction," as Simeon described Jesus, because we are different and challenging when we stand for Christ and choose His teachings while others reject them. We need to have, and act on, the courage of our Christian convictions.
