

March 22, 2020 Fourth Sunday of Lent

Beware of the Dark Side

Remember the Star Wars movies, in which the Dark Side was a symbol of evil? In our second reading Paul tells the Christians in Ephesus that they were once darkness. Paul uses darkness as a symbol of shame. Shame is not just sorrow for sins; it is the fear of being caught in sin, or of telling our weaknesses to another because we think the other will look down on us. Paul was a sinner himself and was blinded when Jesus appeared to him, asking, "Why do you persecute me?" So he knew that the only way to be free of shame is not to hide sins, but to expose them.

Does that mean we have to broadcast our sins on the evening news, or post them all on our social media pages? No; we just need to confess them to God and receive God's forgiveness. We can do this through the sacrament of reconciliation. The priest shows that God loves sinners, no matter what they have done. If you wreck your car, you take it to the repair shop and tell the mechanics what is broken so they can repair it. In reconciliation we bring our sins to the priest so that we can experience forgiveness.

Sometimes other people try to shame us. In the Gospel, Jesus told the Pharisees that they were the sinners, because they had judged the blind man. So when we know that God forgives us and still loves us, we don't have to fear what others might think. Let us instead hold our sins up to the light of forgiveness and be free of our shame.

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TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading — As the prophet Samuel anointed David with oil, the spirit of the LORD rushed upon David (1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a).

Psalm — The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want (Psalm 23).

Second Reading — You who were once darkness are now light in the Lord (Ephesians 5:8-14).

Gospel — The man who had been blind from birth proclaimed: The one called Jesus made clay with his saliva, anointed my eyes with it, and told me to wash (John 9:1-41 [1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38]).

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