

Go Forth...

A SERVICE OF U.S. CATHOLIC MISSION ASSOCIATION

MISSIONARY COMMENTARY

CRYSTAL CLEAR

SUNDAY READINGS:

I Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

Psalm 23:1-3a; 3b-4; 5, 6

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

COMMENTARY

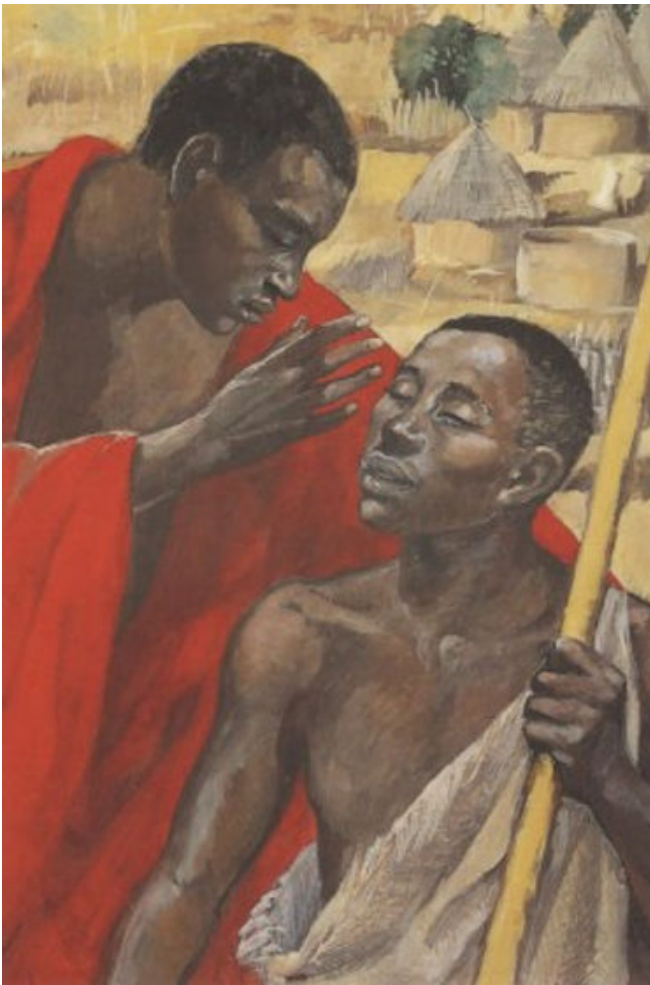
After living in Chile for two years as a seminarian, the Columban Fathers brought me home to finish my preparations for the priesthood, and I was ordained in St. Mary's Cathedral in Fall River, Massachusetts, on September 18th, 1982.

A few days before my ordination, I noticed in the local hometown newspaper that a group of factory workers were going to march in the town parade that year, carrying signs promoting the forming of a union for the workers at a local safety-eyewear factory.

I knew what working conditions were like there, from several summer jobs I spent at the company. More importantly, ...now I could see, in a way that I couldn't before.

My time in Chile had given God the opportunity to heal my sight in many matters, I found—especially regarding the rights and dignity of the working man and woman, which were violently repressed during the Pinochet dictatorship then in power.

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I wrote a letter to the editor of the local newspaper giving the event my full support, quoting from St. John Paul II's then brand-new Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, and reactions were not long in coming. Like the man born blind in today's Gospel, I found a flurry of both support and criticism in response. My parents, too, defended me to their friends and other people in my home parish and town—my Mom had a certificate in religious education for many years, and could easily quote from the 1891 Encyclical on the workers' movement of St. Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*. I continued to support the union organizers until I returned to Chile a few months later. Incredibly, we are still friends today.

May we allow Christ to heal our sight, and to see all things, situations and people as God sees them, whatever the reactions around us may be.

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NOTES ON THE SUNDAY READINGS:

First Reading – I Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a: As God sends Samuel to anoint a new, ideal king, we discover a new way of looking at candidates for leadership of God’s People—and, indeed, a new perspective on living in harmony with God’s will.

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm: 23:1-6: God is a shepherd to his people, in the collective experience of Israel—constantly on watch, guiding them to places of refreshment, nourishment and security, and deserving of trust.

Second Reading – Ephesians 5:8-14: The stark language that distinguishes between those of the light and those of darkness helps establish boundaries for the early Christian communities that are clear and protective, while the communities are nevertheless fully integrated into the wider life of their respective societies, with no inclination to live as a sect.

Gospel – John 9:1-41: This long passage consists of five dramatic moments that not only spring from the healing of a blind man by Jesus, but build on it, reflecting the conflictive relationship between Jews and Jewish Christians in the first century A.D. that the evangelist John lived through.

Notes and Commentary by Fr. Bob Mosher,
a member of the *Missionary Society of Saint Columban*.

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