



4th SUNDAY OF LENT

MARCH 15, 2026



Mission Statement

“Good Shepherd Parish, under the guidance of the true Shepherd Jesus Christ, is a Catholic faith based community seeking to proclaim and live the gospel message. Recognizing our diversity, we strive to bring together a church family, welcoming all people as we grow together in faith, hope and love.”

954 Stuyvesant Ave Irvington NJ 07111 Phone: (973) 375-8568

Fax (973) 375-7040 Email gsirvington@comcast.net

Website: www.goodshepherdnj.com



SERVED BY

Rev. Valentine Ugwuanya Pastor

Denise Perry Secretary

For more information on our parish please go to:

Goodshepherdnj.com

Or email us at

gsirvington@comcast.net

The Pastor's Reflection on 4th Sunday of Lent March 15, 2026.

This Sunday is Fourth Sunday in the season of Lent, and it is called Laetare Sunday, which in parallel to the Gaudete Sunday during the Advent season, marked the moment when we temporarily pause the penitential nature of our Lenten observance and focus ourselves for a while on the expectation of the great joy that we are going to celebrate in a short moment from now. This word 'Laetare' means joy, and it came from the first part of the Introit sung or chanted today during the liturgical celebration this Laetare Sunday, namely, 'Laetare, Jerusalem, et conventum facite omnes qui diligitis eam.' which means, 'Rejoice, O Jerusalem, and gather round, all you who love her.'

This Sunday's gospel tells the story of "The Man Born Blind." The healing of the blind man is the sixth of seven great signs done by Jesus as told in the Gospel of John. These signs are miracles and good for the people in the stories. They also help us to know who Jesus is, that the power of God is at work through him. When the disciples see the man born blind, they ask Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" To understand their question, we must remember how they saw illness and infirmity in those days. It was seen as punishment for sin.

So, noting the man's blindness, Jesus' disciples assume a sin has been committed. Jesus helps them to see things in a new way, saying, "it is so that works of God might be made visible through him."

All over the world right now there are thousands of people who are preparing to be baptized as adult Christians this Easter. Following an ancient tradition, today's gospel is chosen specially for them. During these weeks they are coming to see ever more clearly who Jesus really is, and so the story of the healing of the blind man is ideal for them. But it's also read for us who are already baptized.

When most people looked at the blind man they were thinking about sin: was he blind because he was a sinner or because his parents had sinned? Jesus sees him in a completely different way: this blind man will reveal God's glory. Jesus puts mud on his eyes and tells him to wash in the pool of Siloam, the name of which means 'the one sent'. But Jesus himself is the one sent from the Father. People preparing for baptism are being given a hint that in the waters of the baptismal pool, they are going to be plunged into Jesus himself.

The blind man begins to see with his eyes. But a deeper vision begins to dawn slowly on him. When questioned by the authorities he refers initially to 'the man Jesus'. Later, under the pressure of argument, he says that Jesus is a prophet. Not he is able to see that Jesus must be from God. Finally, when he meets Jesus again, Jesus reveals himself as the Son of Man – a person wielding great authority given by God. But a deeper intuition, not even spoken by Jesus, takes him even further: he calls Jesus 'Lord. This can simply mean 'master' but here it is also the respectful name 'Lord' given by Jews to God himself. We know this because when he calls Jesus 'Lord he worships him. He has really begun to see!

Sadly, the authorities are becoming more and more blind to Jesus because of their religious certainty. Their thoughts are boxed in by a narrow view of what God allows on the Sabbath day. We might say, 'That's well and good for people who are about to be baptized; they come to new insight about Jesus. But what about us? We are already baptized!' This reminds me of a medical fact when it comes to ophthalmic surgery. Sometimes people who have been blind for a long time undergo a successful eye operation where everything functions perfectly. The eye is now working exactly as it should, but they still cannot see. This is because it takes their brain some time to adjust to the new information it is receiving from the optic nerve. I think it may be like that for many of us and our baptism. We have received the Holy Spirit, we have been given the vision and insight, the light of Christ shone into our depths in baptism. But we still can't see it, we seem unable to access it. Lent is a time for post-operative therapy, not physiotherapy but therapy of the spirit.

What we have in the Pharisees is simply refusal to believe. Their minds were made up. They had no use for this Jesus and they were out to get him. But let's face it. Our concentration should not be on what other people did or are doing now. They were certainly suffering from what spiritual writers call 'spiritual blindness'. Now the question should be: "Are there any areas in my life where I am suffering from spiritual blindness?" Another way of asking this would be: Are there any areas where I am rationalizing, that is, trying to justify something I am doing that is wrong, but trying to tell myself it is alright? And we might give this just a little different tweak by saying, "Is there something more I could be doing, but am not?"

Good Shepherd Parish Schedule for Mass & Worship (schedules are subject to change)

Saturday (anticipated) 5:30pm
Holy Day TBD.

Sundays —9:00am, 11:00am
Reconciliation: Saturdays 4:45-5:15pm

National Holidays —9:00am
Adoration Mo-Fri 7:30am-5:00pm

Collection Report		Mar 08, 2026
Weekly Target		\$6,500.00
Collection (Offering+ Fuel & Energy)		\$ 1,595.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$ 4,905.00
Fiscal Year to Date		
Budget:		\$379,864.00
Actual:		\$ 61,848.00
Surplus (Deficit)		\$318.016.00
Rolling 4 Week Averages		
Average Collection:		\$2,173.00
Average Surplus (Deficit)		\$4,327.00

Minister Assignments Mar 21, -Mar 22, 2026

Saturday Sunday	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers	Presiding
3/21 5:30pm	Denise Perry	Denise Perry Nellie Bate Barbara Banks	Fr. Val
3/22 9:00AM	TBD	Augustine Boakye Stanislaus Egeolu- Obimezie Lorita Onyegbule	Fr. Val
3/22 11: 00am	Sylvia Edozie	Padro Burbano Antonia Ogbo Jacqueline Ozouh	Fr. Val

Sunday Mar 15
4th Sunday of Lent
Meeting with Parents
Monday Mar 16
Tuesday Mar 17
Saint Patrick's Day
Wednesday Mar 18
Saint Cyril of Jerusalem
Thursday Mar 19
Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Friday Mar 20
First Day of Spring
Saturday Mar 21

Good Shepherd Parish Information

RECTORY HOURS: Monday Thru Wednesday 10:00AM-2:00PM; Thursday / Friday 9:00AM-12:00PM

Parish Registration Forms can be found at the back of the church or call the rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION Saturday 4:45PM - 5:15PM

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM In order to have your child baptized at Good Shepherd, the parents must be registered and active members of our parish. Godparents or sponsors must meet qualifications as to have received both sacraments of Communion and Confirmation, attend Mass regularly and been a registered parishioner at a Catholic Church Baptisms will be held the third Sunday of the month. For more information please call the Rectory at (973) 375-8568

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY Couples who are planning a wedding should call the parish office to meet the priest, to choose the date of the wedding and before any other arrangements are made call (973)375-8568

PASTORAL OF THE SICK Notify a priest of all who are hospitalized, home-bound, or Emergencies call (973)375-8568

ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS, RCIA. Adults interested in becoming members of the Catholic Church and Catholics in need of Sacraments, Confirmation or Eucharist; inquire at the Rectory. To register please call the rectory at (973-375-8568

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Sunday of October-April from 10:00-11:00 am in the Church building. For more information please call the Rectory at (973-375-8568. Children's mass will be every second Sunday of the month, at the 11AM mass.

SEEING IS BELIEVING. Fr. Charles Irvin from Diocese of Lansing.

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

We have all heard the phrase “Seeing is believing.” The idea comes, I suppose, from skeptical people who won’t believe anything is real or anything is true unless and until they see it for themselves.

In today’s Gospel account the phrase “Seeing is believing” is paradoxically both proved and disproved. It is proved by the blind man eventually seeing Jesus and acknowledging that indeed Jesus is “from God.” The blind man recognized Jesus for who He is. The Pharisees, on the other hand, men who were sighted, did not or would not see Jesus for who He is. The blind man could see, the sighted Pharisees were blind. Seeing, they would not believe. In this Gospel account Jesus gives us some additional clues as to who He really is. You will recall that in the Book of Genesis we find God creating us from “the slime of the earth.” Here we find slimy mud formed from Jesus’ saliva bringing light into the blind man’s darkness. Bringing light into the darkness, we recall, was God’s first act of creation along with fashioning us from the slime of the earth.

A second clue as to who Jesus really is can be found in the fact that Jesus didn’t use water to form the mud. If He had used water some might say that the miraculous power that gave the man sight came from water. No. Jesus used His own saliva to demonstrate that the miraculous power giving sight to the man born blind came from Him and from Him alone.

Let me turn your attention now to the fact that the blind man’s recognition of who Jesus really is came about gradually... through a process. When first questioned he told his neighbors that “the man called Jesus” made paste, put it on his eyes, and told him to go wash in the waters of Siloam. When asked where Jesus was he said he didn’t know.

When brought to the Pharisees who questioned him as to the man who healed him the blind man said, “He is a prophet.” The Pharisees, as we know, refused to believe that Jesus was anything other than a sinner.

Finally, at the conclusion of the episode, Jesus searched him out and when He found the man he acknowledged that Jesus was the “Son of Man” and then worshipped Him, an act that one gives to God alone. Worshipping anyone or anything else other than God is blasphemy and idolatry. In short, the formerly blind man acknowledged the divinity of Christ. So, for the blind man, truly, “seeing is believing.” The Pharisees give us the skeptical side of the phrase. Sighted though they were, they were in fact blind and living in darkness apart from God.

At first, they suspended judgment about Jesus. Doubting the blind man’s testimony, they sent for his parents and questioned them. They gave their testimony but it didn’t help the Pharisees to see things at all. Their doubt only increased. They declared Jesus to be a sinner and sent for the blind man to testify once again. Quite forthrightly he told them that he had already given his testimony. He then bluntly asked the Pharisees why they wouldn’t listen. He went on to declare: “Now here is an astonishing thing! He has opened my eyes and you turn around and say you don’t know where He comes from!” The blind man’s progress in gaining spiritual insight is matched by the spiritual leaders’ step-by-step journey into darkness and blindness. Even though Christ, the Light of the World, was standing before them their stubborn reliance only on themselves and their blind pride led them into darkness.

Once again, we are dealing in this Gospel account with St. John’s major themes: order out of chaos, light out of darkness, good out of evil, and life out of death. The question now presented itself to us here in America in 2017 is: Do we recognize what our real struggle is all about? Sure, situation in Iraq vexes us, the war against Islamic terrorists continues, the economy is faltering, drugs and pornography beset us, and the cost of living has gone through the roof. But what about the presence of God in our lives? Do we have eyes to see and ears to hear Him or do our many concerns blind us?

We don’t have to go to the trouble to try and find God. He has come to search us out just as He did the blind man who had miraculously been given sight. The basic movement is the coming of God to us. From the time God entered the Garden of Eden in search of Adam and Eve, to the time when He was born among us in a manger in Bethlehem, to the time He came upon us all in Pentecost, to this very day and this very Mass, God comes to us. The Light of the World has come and the darkness shall not overcome it.

There is only one darkness that can prevail, the darkness of our own lack of attention and our own lack of vision when it comes to His presence in our lives. It may be true that we do not willfully ignore God and are blind to His presence, but if “seeing is believing” how can we believe if we do not see?

Lent is time set aside when we try to see God in our lives. Lent is a time when we try to step away from all of our worldly concerns and give some time and attention to what’s going on in our souls. To strengthen our faith and our belief we need, along with the blind man, ask: “Lord, that I might see” and then expect a miracle, the miracle of seeing the Light of the World in our darkened days.

Our blindness is not the blindness of the Pharisees. Ours is being too busy for time with God, too worried about the cares of this world. “Seeing is believing.” Oh, Lord, let me see your light, let me recognize your presence in my life; open my eyes because I know who you are and I know what you can do.

Oh, Lord, that I may see.