

Homily for April 2, 2000
4th Sunday of Lent Cycle A – RCIA option

By Father Charles Bowes

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41

The Lord lifts us up.

What brings us to our knees? Pain certainly...excruciating, searing, unexpected...my first kidney stone attacked without warning...I sank to my knees in the middle of the living room floor much to my amazement and my parent's horror. "It's worse than giving birth to children," said the secretary who experienced both.

Business reversals, worry, the death of a child or spouse or loved one, terrible things pull us down, to our knees.

And yet, knee-bending can be joyous...gratifying, beautiful...as when a parent ties a child's shoe...bridesmaids, mothers make the last adjustments before the walk down the aisle.

On St. Valentine's day some two years ago I watched a young man at a neighboring table rise and then kneel before the girl of his dreams and ask her to marry him...we all applauded.

So we kneel in joy and in sorrow...with pleasure and regret...what makes us kneel here, this fourth Sunday of Lent? Usually it's for prayer...but today, and next week as the week before...today it's for sin, for blindness...for all the unloving choices and the struggles that underlie them...these bring us down and these we remember.

Our Elect for the sacraments of Easter – those who are to be baptized – who journey to the table by means of the water bath – these offer a profound service...they have named the sin we all experience. They lead us not only by their words but by their presence in our midst – in the middle of us...isn't that where sin, blindness finds its place? ...In the middle...in the midst of...our unloving choices and the struggles that underlie them? They're part of us. We experience powerlessness in the face of it all, and we beg for God to deliver, to heal, to set free. Is this not why we kneel now to invite the invasion of God in the name of Jesus?

We become a sea of kneeling people, united by our common brokenness and blindness. The one in our midst to be baptized is our treasured one, our courageous self. Acknowledging our shared powerlessness, we invite the Lord to let us see, and I invite Mrs. Klich, our Pastoral Associate, to call us to that prayer.

The Lord lifts us up.