The 4th Sunday of Lent and:
A Remembrance of Archbishop Oscar Romero

March 26, 2017  Tony and Veronica Nitko

“Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but God looks into the heart. (Samuel)

Prayer Requests and Announcements

Opening Hymn: “Be Not Afraid: (426)

Opening Prayer: In quietness and trust we yield ourselves this moment:
To the Presence that gives us life;
To the Reality that existed before the earth was made;
To the Spirit that comes with fire to turn around our lives and make them new.
Burn within us, God!. Let us feel your fire!
Burn warm with love! Burn bright with joy!
Burn hot to consume all that makes us doubt your power within us, your love through us.
Burn away barriers to completeness.
Burn away limited consciousness, inbred by habits of thought, by opinions of others, by imagined necessities.
Burn away fear and teach us the looseness of listening, the rhythm of trust. Amen

First Reading: SM 16:1B, 6-7, 10-13A: God said to Samuel: “Fill your horn with oil, and be on your way. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen my king from among his sons.” As Jesse and his sons came to the sacrifice, Samuel looked at Eliab and thought: “Surely God’s anointed is here.” But God said to Samuel: “Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but God looks into the heart.” God has not chosen any one of these.” Then Samuel asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” Jesse replied, “There is still the youngest, who is tending the sheep.” Samuel said to Jesse, “Send for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until he arrives here.” Jesse sent and had the young man brought to
them. God said, “There—anoint him, for this is the one!” Then Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed David in the presence of his brothers; and from that day on, the spirit of the Lord rushed upon David.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 146: 6-7, 8-9, 9-10)

God keeps faith forever,  
Secures justice for the oppressed,  
Gives food to the hungry  
God sets the captives free.  

**R: Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.**  
God gives sight to the blind.  
God raises up those who were bowed down.  
God loves the just.  
God protects strangers.  

**R: Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.**  
The fatherless and the widow God sustains  
But thwarts the way of the wicked.  
The Holy One shall reign forever;  
Your God, O Zion, through all generations. **Alleluia.**  

**R: Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs.**

**Second Reading:** A Remembrance of Oscar Romero

Although he began as a conservative archbishop, opposed to the progressive liberation theology that was popular among those seeking to help poor farmers in El Salvador, Oscar Romero was deeply impacted when his friend, a priest, was assassinated as a result of commitment to social justice. Through weekly homilies on national radio, Romero advocated an end to repression of the people in El Salvador, thus making himself an enemy of the State. Below, from Bishop Romero himself: a poem he wrote entitled “The Long View”:

“The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is beyond our vision.  
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God’s work: Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us. No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness. No program accomplishes the church’s mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about:  
We plant seeds that one day will grow.  
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.  
We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities.  
We cannot do everything and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for God’s grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own. “Amen.

Romero was seen as an enemy of the government and the military. He was not successful in ending the violence: more than 75,000 Salvadorans would eventually be killed, one million would leave the country, and another million would be left homeless. Because of his prophetic witness, Romero became a target of assassination. “A bishop will die,” Romero had said, foreseeing his own fate, “But the church of God—the people—will not perish.” (It is right that we honor him this night.)

**Gospel Acclamation:**

**Gospel: John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38: A Man Born Blind Receives Sight**

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. In the world, ‘I am the light of the world.’ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which means Sent). He went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, ‘Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?’ Some were saying, ‘It is he.’ Others were saying, ‘No, but it is someone like him.’ He kept saying, ‘I am the man.’ But they kept asking him, ‘Then how were your eyes opened?’ He answered, ‘The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, “Go to Siloam and wash.” Then I went and washed and received my sight.’ They said to him, ‘Where is he?’ He said, ‘I do not know.’

They brought the man who had formerly been blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, ‘He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.’ Some of the Pharisees said, ‘This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.’ But others said, ‘How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?’ And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, ‘What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.’ He said, ‘He is a prophet.’ They answered and said to him, “You were born totally in sin, and you are trying to teach us?” Then they threw him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’ He answered, ‘And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he. He said, ‘Lord, I believe.’ And he worshipped him.

This is the Good News of Salvation. **Glory and praise to our Savior, Jesus Christ.**
Silent Reflection and Dialogue

Intercessions: Based on the Justice Prayer by Mother Teresa

Sung response: “O God Hear our Prayer”

O God, we pray for all those in our world who are suffering from Injustice. R.
For those who are discriminated against because of their race, color, or religion. R.
For those in prison especially those on Death Row. R.
For those who are hounded for speaking the inconvenient truth. R.
For those tempted to violence as a cry against overwhelming hardship. R.
For those deprived of reasonable health and education. R.
For those suffering from hunger and famine. R.
For those too weak to help themselves and who have no one else to help them. R.
For the unemployed who cry out for work but do not find it. R.
We pray for all our acquaintances who are personally affected. (Please add your own intentions.) R.

Forgive us, O God, if we unwittingly share in the conditions or in a system that perpetuates injustice. Amen.

Gathering at the Table:

Come You Weary and Restless
God be with you. And also with you.
Lift up your hearts. We lift them up to God.
Let us give thanks to God our Creator.
It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Come, you weary and restless, Come, all you who hunger and thirst. Jesus calls us to dine as friends, Come, God’s feast of welcome awaits us. As we partake of this bread and wine, we honor Creator and Creation: Through this broken bread, we participate in the body of Christ. Through the cup of blessing, we participate in new life Christ gives. As we bless and share these gifts, we celebrate our fellowship with Jesus. All are worthy; all are welcome! As we receive the fruits of the Spirit, as we celebrate the communion of all things, Creator, Christ, and Spirit dance as one. So may it always be.
(Those who wish, hold out your hand, palm down, over or toward the bread and cup as a group we pray.) Come, Holy One, Come. Bless this meal; Bless this fellowship
of people gathered here; Bless our lives, that justice and love may be the measure of our common witness. Amen. Sing the Our Father.

Pass the Bread and Wine.

Breaking and Sharing of the Bread Hymn:

*U-bi ca-ri-tas et a-mor; U-bi ca-ri-tas De-us i-bi est.*

(Repeat as many times as needed.)

Silent Reflection

Closing Words: From: The Violence of Love by Archbishop Oscar Romero

Romero reminds us that love gives plenitude to all human duties:

“Love gives abundance to all human duties. Love makes all human duties full, complete. When we act out of love, we are within the law. If our love looks like resisting authority, we ought to ask ourselves if our motivation is love or just being contrary. If love is what drives us, we will be doing what is good.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning step along the way, and opportunity for the Lord’s grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.”

Blessing:

May God Bless us and keep us. May God’s face shine upon us. May God be gracious to us and grant to us, and to all our broken world, peace. May the blessing of Almighty God, Creator, Redeemer, and Holy Spirit, come upon us and remain with us forever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Blest Are They (635)