

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS FOR MASS FIFTH THURSDAY OF LENT

First Reading

Gen 17:3-9

v 3 God spoke to Abram, 'Here now is my covenant with you: you shall become the father of a multitude of nations. ... your name shall be Abraham.'

Second Reading

Jn 8:51-59

V 51 Jesus said to the Jews: 'I tell you most solemnly, whoever keeps my word will never see death.'

V 52 The Jews said, 'Now we know for certain that you are possessed. Abraham is dead, and the prophets are dead ... who are you claiming to be?' ...

V 58 ... Jesus replied: 'I tell you most solemnly, before Abraham was, I AM.'

Reflection

273 words

Chapters 8 and 9 of John are a unity.

Jesus proclaims himself the truth, the only true light of the world but the Jews (even 'the Jews who believed in him' Jn 8:31) refuse belief. John concludes the disputation with Jesus' solemn declaration of his divine status that validates his claim to teach the truth.

Then in chapter 9 he narrates the healing of the man born blind. This was our gospel reading on the fourth Sunday of Lent when our catechumens took another step towards their

baptism, their coming from darkness into the light, just as happened with the blind man.

John's gospel demonstrates a supreme irony. The Israelite believers are proud of their descent from Abraham, the first one to believe in the Lord God.

The blind man, manifestly a sinner in their eyes, comes to belief that Jesus is the light.

The devout Jews hide in darkness behind their ancestor's faith while the sinner believes and is bathed in the light.

The liturgical readings today invite us to renew our faith. The Paschal Triduum is the Church's joyful celebration of the new life that is brought into the world through the death and resurrection of Christ.

In the final week of our Lenten preparation for Easter, these readings remind us to seek God's help to make a fresh surrender of ourselves to Jesus in his complete mystery – Word of God come to earth, the fullness of grace and truth, the resurrection and the life, true man and true God. These texts remind us that faith is a two-fold gift – assent to divine truth and personal encounter with our triune God.