

## Fourth Sunday of Lent

If you have ever been on a long transcontinental flight, the stewards often give you two things: a set of free headphones, and a free eye mask for sleeping. In the Gospel for today, the Lord Jesus heals a man born blind; however, not only does He heal the man's physical blindness, He also heals his interior blindness as well. Jesus will do the same for us as well if we allow Him to work this grace in our lives! The light, Who is Jesus, shines on everyone involved in the story, and that light is available to us all; indeed, Jesus desires from His entire being as Son of God, to pour out this light upon us and our families and our Church Family as well!

In the story, Jesus applies a paste made of clay formed by His spittle and dirt, to the man's eyes. Why would Jesus do such a strange thing? In the culture of Jesus, spittle, as well as other bodily fluids, was considered as to contain the very essence of a person's life. This story is about a Jesus making a new creation of the Man born blind; it is also about allowing Jesus to work the miracle of a new creation, a new life in our lives as well. The clay is obviously a reference to the creation of man and woman in the Creation story of Genesis, which lost the light of Grace and God by their sin. This story is about the restoration of light and Grace and a New Creation for those who believe!

The man born blind not only receives the gift of his sight, but also begins to see, more and more, that Jesus is the one Who is Sent, (Siloam means: sent). Jesus makes visible to him and to each of us, Who God really is; that Jesus is the power of God in Himself to heal what has been darkened and blinded by sin.

The disciples thought the blind man's condition was due to either his sin (which would have been impossible, because he was born this way), or the sin of his parents, which was profoundly presumptuous and indicates their blindness. Rather, Jesus uses the poverty of this poor man, as an opportunity to show us and them the power of God over the powers of darkness and sin. Even the neighbors of this man, rather than rejoicing over the freedom of this man from his isolating blindness, insist on bringing him to the Pharisees, because this miracle occurred on the Sabbath. How blind they are! The Pharisees, rather than acknowledging

the power of God at work in the Person of Jesus, deny that power by insisting that this was the breaking of the Sabbath laws! How blind they are! Rather than interpreting the Law of God for our benefit and our Spiritual Freedom, they would have kept this poor man entrapped in his poverty and blindness! How blind we can be!

The Blind Man, is truly healed. He alone can see, he cannot deny what he has seen, even in the face of being excommunicated from Judaism by being thrown out of the Synagogue because of his testimony: "If this man were not of God, He would be unable to do anything!" Jesus comes to seek him out, and confirms his growing faith, that He is the One Sent by God, the Messiah, upon which the man wholeheartedly accepts Him.

So what does this story have to do with us, as we continue our Lenten Journey to audit our relationship with God, our families and our relationships with others? Because of original sin, we are so accustomed to the darkness, we often are like those Pharisees, and refuse to see, if what we see and hear does not agree with our ideas and attitudes- spiritual blindness! Many times, we fail to see the wonder and the glory of God within our very lives in our families and within each human person we encounter; instead we treat them as objects of our anger, our frustrations, our judgements- spiritual blindness! Our Lent is meant to bring us to the Brilliant light of the Glory of God in Jesus Risen from the dead; however, we often go about as if our Christian life is a burden, not a great gift and joy- spiritual blindness! Jesus says to us today: take off the blinders and with my Grace, begin to see!