

Lent IV Sunday Homily on Jn 9: 1-41

The fourth Sunday of Lent is known as “Laetare (Rejoice) Sunday,” expressing the Church's joy in anticipation of the Resurrection of our Lord. Today's readings both remind us that it is God who gives us proper vision in body as well as in soul and instruct us **that we should be constantly on our guard against spiritual blindness.**

By describing the anointing of David as the second king of Israel, the first reading, taken from the First Book of Samuel, illustrates how blind we are in our judgments and how much we need God's help. In the second reading, St. Paul reminds the Ephesians of their **new responsibility as children of light to live as children of the light, producing every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth.** Presenting the miracle of Jesus' giving of sight to a man born blind, today's Gospel teaches us **the necessity of opening the eyes of the mind by Faith**, and warns us that those who assume they see the truth are often blind, while those who acknowledge their blindness are given clear vision. In this episode, the most unlikely person, namely the beggar born blind, receives the light of Faith in Jesus, while the religion-oriented, law-educated Pharisees remain spiritually blind. To live as a Christian is to see, to have clear vision about God, about ourselves and about others. **Our Lenten prayers and sacrifices should serve to heal our spiritual blindness so that we can look at others, see them as children of God and love them as our own brothers and sisters saved by the death and Resurrection of Jesus.**

1) **We need to allow Jesus to heal our spiritual blindness.** We all have blind-spots -- in our marriages, our parenting, our work habits, and our personalities. We often wish to remain in the dark, preferring darkness to light. Even practicing Christians can be blind to the poverty, injustice and pain around them. Let us

remember, however, that Jesus wants to heal our blindness, the root causes of our blindness: namely, self-centeredness, greed, anger, hatred, prejudice, jealousy, addiction to evil habits and hardness of heart. Let us pray with the Scottish Bible scholar William Barclay, "God our Father, help us see Christ more clearly, love him more dearly and follow him more nearly."

2) We need to get rid of cultural blindness. Our culture also has blind-spots. Often it is blind to things like selfless love, happiness, fidelity with true, committed sexual love in marriage, and the value of human life from birth to natural death. Our culture has become anesthetized to the violence, the sexual innuendo, and the enormous suffering in the world around us. Let us counteract this cultural blindness by experiencing Jesus dwelling within us and within others through personal prayer, meditative reading of the Bible and a genuine Sacramental life.

#1: The blind farmer was often taken for a walk in the fields by a kind neighbor. However kindly the neighbor might have been, he was undoubtedly a coward. When a bull charged towards them one day, he abandoned the blind man. The bull, puzzled by a lack of fear, nudged the blind farmer in the back. He turned very quickly, caught the bull by the horns and threw it to the ground with a bump that left it breathless. "Aidan," shouted the neighbor, "I never knew you were so strong." "It's the strength of Faith," said the blind man. "If I could have got that fella off the handlebars of his bicycle, I'd have thrashed him properly." (He was under the impression that a bicycle had hit him).