

# THE Gospel - Forth Sunday Lent 22th March 2020

## Gospel - John 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38

### 'On the Sabbath, Jesus cures a man who was blind from birth'

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

The blind man went off and washed himself and came away with his sight restored.

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. He spat on the ground, made a paste with the spittle, put this over the eyes of the blind man and said to him, 'Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam' (a name that means 'sent'). So the blind man went off and washed himself, and came away with his sight restored.

His neighbours and people who earlier had seen him begging said, 'Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'Yes, it is the same one.' Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' The man himself said, 'I am the man.'

They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It had been a sabbath day when Jesus made the paste and opened the man's eyes, so when the Pharisees asked him how he had come to see, he said, 'He put a paste on my eyes, and I washed, and I can see.' Then some of the Pharisees said, 'This man cannot be from God: he does not keep the sabbath.' Others said, 'How could a sinner produce signs like this?' And there was disagreement among them. So they spoke to the blind man again, 'What have you to say about him yourself, now that he has opened your eyes?' 'He is a prophet' replied the man.

'Are you trying to teach us,' they replied 'and you a sinner through and through, since you were born!' And they drove him away.

Jesus heard they had driven him away, and when he found him he said to him, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Sir,' the man replied 'tell me who he is so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You are looking at him; he is speaking to you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe', and worshipped him.

### Thinking of John's Gospel:

- In what ways have your eyes been opened? What do you see now that you did not see before?

- What have been moments of enlightenment for you?

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### Homily Points:

- Near the end of John's Gospel, the Pharisees ask Jesus, "Surely we are not also blind, are we?" We could imagine the tone these religious leaders take as one of sarcasm or derision as they confront the son of a carpenter who dares consider himself someone who can speak with authority and perform wonders on behalf of God. Jesus' response to them almost comes out as a riddle: "If you were blind, you would have no sin;/but now you are saying, 'We see,' so your sin remains."
- The Pharisees are a perfect foil for the man born blind. Their lives have been devoted to studying the word of God and following his law with the utmost fidelity. In their society, and in ours today, people with this kind of devotion would be the ones we would expect to have the sharpest spiritual eyesight and to be trustworthy and able guides for others. And yet, in our Gospel, they are upstaged by a man who was blind from birth, presumably illiterate, and considered sinful. In one day, this man gains both physical and spiritual sight when he responds to Jesus' self revelation with the words, "I do believe, Lord."