



SUNDAY GOSPEL

Yearning to See

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

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. 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.' Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbours 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.'

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. 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 him, 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?' And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out of the synagogue, 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. ■

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Pope Francis

Today's Gospel sets before us the story of the man born blind, to whom Jesus gives sight. The lengthy account opens with a blind man who begins to see and it closes — and this is curious — with the alleged seers who remain blind in soul. The miracle is narrated by John in just two verses, because the Evangelist does not want to draw attention to the miracle itself, but rather to what follows, to the discussions it arouses, also to the gossip. So many times a good work, a work of charity arouses gossip and discussion, because there are some who do not want to see the truth.

While the blind man gradually draws near to the light, the doctors of the law on the contrary sink deeper and deeper into their inner blindness. Locked in their presumption, they believe that they already have the light, therefore, they do not open themselves to the truth of Jesus. They do everything to deny the evidence. Their closure to the light becomes aggressive and leads to the expulsion from the temple of the man who was healed.

The blind man's journey on the contrary is a journey in stages that begins with the knowledge of Jesus' name. He does not

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know anything else about him; he first considers him a prophet and then a man who is close to God. Once he has been banished from the temple, expelled from society, Jesus finds him again and “opens his eyes” for the second time, by revealing his own identity to him: “I am the Messiah”, he tells him. At this point the man who had been blind exclaims: “Lord, I believe!”, and he worships Jesus. This Gospel passage makes evident the drama of the inner blindness of so many people, also our own, for sometimes we have moments of inner blindness.

Our lives are sometimes similar to that of the blind man who opened himself to the light, to God and to his grace. Sometimes, unfortunately, they are similar to that of the doctors of the law: from the height of our pride we judge others, and even the Lord!

Today, we are invited to open ourselves to the light of Christ in order to bear fruit in our lives, to eliminate unchristian behaviours; we are all Christians but we all, everyone sometimes has unchristian behaviours, behaviours that are sins. We must repent of this, eliminate these behaviours in order to journey

well along the way of holiness, which has its origin in baptism.

We, too, have been “enlightened” by Christ in baptism, so that, as St Paul reminds us, we may act as “children of light”, with humility, patience and mercy. These doctors of the law had neither humility, nor patience, nor mercy! ■

TALKING POINTS

1. Today’s Gospel tells two stories: one of a man who is blind, but made able to see; the other of the Pharisees, who think that they have the ‘light’ but are internally blind. All of us identify with both of these stories at different times. Which do you identify with more today? Why?
2. Pope Francis encourages us to recognise our unchristian behaviours and repent from them. How can we know ourselves better in order to be more like Christ? How can you let God’s light change your heart?

PRAYER POINTS

Pray for each other: Ask about and pray for the needs of the group members. Individuals might pray for themselves or ask someone else to pray for them.

Reflect: Spend some time reflecting on the ways that you have been blind to God or others lately. Ask Jesus for forgiveness and the strength to see again.

Response: *Lord, I believe in you, help me to see.*

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, you give sight to the blind. Help us to recognise our need for you and know your love for us.

