

GOSPEL

John 9:1. 6-9. 13-17. 34-38 (Shorter form)

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.

HOMILY OF ST JOHN PAUL II

10 March 2002

1. "Laetare, Jerusalem (Rejoice, Jerusalem)...". With the words of the prophet Isaiah, the Church invites us to rejoice today, at the midpoint of our Lenten penitential journey. Joy and light are the dominant theme of today's liturgy. The Gospel narrates the story of "a man born blind" (Jn 9,1). Seeing him, Jesus made clay with his saliva, spread the clay on his eyes

and told him: "Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing" (Jn 9,6-7).

The man born blind represents the human person marred by sin, who desires to know the truth about himself and his personal destiny, but is prevented from doing so by congenital illness. Only Jesus can cure him: He is "the light of the world" (Jn 9,5). Handing himself over to him, every human being who is spiritually blind from birth has the fresh possibility of "coming to the light", namely to supernatural life.

2. Along with the healing of the blind man, the Gospel highlights the unbelief of the Pharisees, who refuse to acknowledge the miracle, since Jesus worked it on the sabbath, in their judgement violating the Mosaic law. Thus, an eloquent paradox emerges, that Christ himself sums up with the words: "I have come into the world for judgement so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind" (Jn 9,39).

For the one who meets Christ, there is no other alternative: either he recognises his need of him and of his light, or he chooses to do without. In the case of doing without Christ, the same presumption prevents both the one who thinks he is just before God and the one who considers himself an atheist, from being open to authentic conversion.

3. Dear brothers and sisters, may no one close his soul to Christ! He gives to the one who accepts him the light of faith, the light that can transform the heart, and, consequently, mentalities, social, political, and economic situations dominated by sin. "... I do believe, Lord!" (Jn 9,38). With the man born blind, may each of us be ready humbly to profess our own attachment to him.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary who is so totally pervaded by the radiance of divine grace obtain the light of Christ for us.

continued over page ►

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/ Homily?



Head: How does the blind man's understanding of Jesus grow throughout the Gospel — and how is this different from the way the Pharisees respond to what they see?



Heart: When has an encounter with Jesus (or a moment of truth) clarified something in my life — and when have I resisted that clarity because it was uncomfortable or disruptive?



Hands: What is one way I am being invited to stand by what I have come to see or believe, even if it costs me approval, comfort, or certainty?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. “Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray”)
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the 'Glory Be'.