

4th Sun. of Lent

Just a reminder that Stations of the Cross are 6:00pm on Fridays, and Confessions will be offered from 6:30 to 7:30pm each of the next three Thursdays.

+ I did not enjoy losing an hour of sleep last Saturday night, but I do appreciate it now being daylight longer in the evening. It's a reminder that spring is right around the corner, the time for working in the yard or garden, backyard get-togethers, or anything outside can now be done well into the evening. There's a sensation of reality coming back to life, whether it be physical, communal, spiritual...there's a renewal of life that seems to be stirring, which reaffirms the goodness and meaning of reality...all made possible by light

Before Jesus cures the blind man he tells his disciples, "We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work." This makes perfect sense in the physical realm, everyone understands the logic of this statement. You can't work in the dark, you need light to see what you're doing, and light is only available during the day. Now we can work at night these days because we have electricity and all sorts of artificial light, but the need for light remains...darkness, or as Jesus says, night, makes it impossible to work.

The work Jesus does in this passage is restoring sight to the blind man. But notice he says, it's the works of the one who sent me. And so this specific miracle symbolizes all of the work instructed by God, which can be summarized as loving and serving Him. Everything we do should be ordered to God in one way or another. And it's only this approach to life, this motivation, that allows us to see and participate in the tremendous meaning of life. But one must be alive for this, and before Christ or without him, one has no life. This was the blind man, at least initially.

Notice how Jesus goes about restoring his sight. He spit in the ground and made clay which he rubbed on his eyes. This is a creation story. On Ash Wednesday we were reminded that we are but dust. But dust doesn't stick together by itself. When you add water though it does, it can take shape. And so it is with man. Jesus making clay demonstrates his mission to recreate us, to bring us back to life. But life without sight is no way to live, unable to engage and enjoy reality. So Jesus gives the blind man the ability to see. And physical sight, that's just the beginning, the greatest vision is spiritual sight.

When we hear of this miracle our focus is probably on the man's ability to see. But the ability to see, that by itself, the mere ability, it's pointless...it does no good unless there is light which allows us to use that ability. You can see, but not in the dark. This is true of all abilities of sight. Even nocturnal animals rely on light, they just don't need merely as much of it. This is why our Lord said he needed to heal the blind man during the day. Think how silly and unimpressive it would have been if he restored his sight in the dark.

When Jesus says, night is coming when no one can work, he wasn't just talking about later that day. He was hinting at Good Friday, at his death when darkness would cover the earth. Thanks be to God the Son rose on Easter morning. The necessary light with which to see returned. Our Lord makes this very clear, "I am the light of the world." It's not just enough to have our sight restored, one must live in the light to enjoy what sight offers. You need both, sight and light, and if you do...everything comes alive.

The Pharisees were in the same light as the disciples, in the presence of Christ. But the Pharisees, like the blind man, couldn't see him...not for who he truly was. They were blind and as a result, bitter and afraid. The same is true of us when we sin. Sin blinds us to what is true and good and beautiful. And living in a state of sin is to live life in a perpetual Good Friday. The

sacrament of confession is how Christ restores our sight by removing our sins. What blind person wouldn't take advantage of the opportunity to be able to see, and without delay? A person who has been forgiven is a happy person, a person who is at ease because they no longer stumble around in the dark, and gone is the fear caused by darkness.

The restoration of sight is offered and the necessary light does shine here on earth through the ministry and sacraments of the Catholic Church. It was with this in mind that Jesus said, "I am with you always, until the end of the world." His work and presence remains. Christ came to do the work of the one who sent him, to restore your sight. And by living in union with Christ you live in the light that comes from him. We're able to use our new ability to see. Reality is brought to life for us, and by engaging it we encounter its truth, beauty and goodness. Simply put...we find life meaningful, and it's because we've come to encounter God.