

Homily on March 22, 2020 - The Blind Man's Fight for Faith
1 Samuel 16: 1-13; Psalm 23; Ephesians 5: 8-14; John 9: 1-41

The long story of the Man Born Blind is less about the miracle of the **Lord restoring the man's eyesight**, and more about the man coming to faith despite tremendous opposition.

Consider this: the story is 41 verses long, but the actual healing of the man takes only two verses at the very beginning of the reading, verses 6 and 7: "When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, Go wash in the Pool of Siloam (which means Sent). So he went and washed, and came back able to see". This miracle is different from every other miracle!

But look at what follows: **the man grows in faith despite the opposition, first from his neighbours, then from the Pharisees, then from his parents who were afraid of the Pharisees.** The man responded by refuting their arguments, holding on to his faith in Jesus; and in saying, "I do believe, Lord," and worshiped him. It was true that he was born and lived blind depending on the generosity of others. But once he received his sight or faith in Jesus, he could see Jesus as the messiah, the Son of God, the saviour.

The Pharisees went in the opposite direction, determined to discredit Jesus and condemn him as a sinful man. By the end of the reading, they were the blind ones and the Man Born Blind was the one who could see.

What I want to concentrate on today is this: **how the Man Born Blind experienced Jesus as he grew in faith and how we see things around us?** The opposition the blind man received is the same as what we experience when we grow in faith. We will always be confronted with those who do not have faith and who want to persuade us to give up our faith. We might face it from our coworkers or from the ones who used to attend the church or from your own

children and grand children whom you considered as true believers in Jesus. Or you may come upon people who are not just anti-Catholic, but anti-Christian, or anti-God. They may challenge those areas of our faith that cannot be explained, but can only be believed, such as the Trinity, or Jesus as both God and man, the role Mary the mother of Jesus! Then there are those who belittle you because they oppose our ways of living the Christian life, our morality, those actions which we are convinced as right or wrong especially the sacredness of life.

Why do people have such opposition to our faith? Probably for a lot of reasons. One of them might be envy; they wish they could be part of a strong Church group, but instead of coming and joining one, they try to destroy those who do come. Another reason might be intellectual arrogance. There are people who are so sure of their superior intelligence, that they see all who take a step outside of their reason and their faith as being idiotic.

Secondly how do we see things? **Are we able to see others as the persons whom Jesus loves?** For **example:** Can we see others, as Jesus saw the sinful woman caught in adultery, or the samaritan woman who had six husbands, or Peter whom Jesus considered his corner stone when he rejected three times? Jesus through that loving look, or the five thousand people who flocked to listen to his preaching in the wilderness where Jesus multiplied five bread and two fish to satisfy their hunger, who **viewed everything different and taught the disciples how God looks at us and our lives, as his beloved children.** Are we able to forgive others seven times seventy as Jesus taught us and showed us at the Crucifixion? If so we are able to see as the blind man who had faith in Jesus. Blindness can come upon us the very moment we commit sins and try to live in our sinful lives. Lent is a time for reconciliation, repair and reunion with the Lord. May God bless you! +++ Amen. Fr. Thomas Kakkaniyil

The blind man gets sight and testifies his faith in Jesus...How do we witness our Faith in Jesus?..How Jesus sees us and others? ...Are we able to see others as Jesus sees them?....Are we ready for reconciliation with others and God