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Year A 4TH SUNDAY OF LENT (LAETARE SUNDAY)

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION ALSO AVAILABLE

Sunday Mass Readings

FIRST READING:

1 Samuel 16:1, 6-7, 10-13

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 22(23)

SECOND READING:

Ephesians 5:8-14

GOSPEL:

John 9:1-41

"Lord, I believe."



James Tissot, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) on the readings for children.

Pray

- In the Gospel today we hear the story of Jesus' healing the man born blind.
- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- Can you think of a time when a spiritual blindness you were experiencing was healed? A time when you saw something clearly for the first time, or experienced the love of Jesus, or felt the Holy Spirit reveal a new truth to you?
- Are there any areas of your life where you are holding onto blindness - deliberately closing your eyes to the needs of others, or to choices you know you should make, or changes you know are necessary in your life? Take time this week, especially during Lent, to ask the Lord for the grace to see your life through His eyes.

Talk

In today's Gospel we hear about Jesus healing the man who was born blind.

- Have everyone close their eyes, and try to describe the room they are in from memory: what people are wearing, what objects are in the room, what colours...
- Imagine if you had never been able to see, if colours and light and dark had no real meaning for you.
- Jesus heals a man born blind in this Gospel, which is an incredible miracle. But even more incredible is the faith of the man in Jesus. Other people who were not blind in this story still couldn't see that Jesus was God! How do we know that Jesus is God? How do we know Jesus is our Saviour?

Family Challenge!

Make a big effort this week to be conscious of your surroundings: if you see a mess, tidy it up! If you see a beautiful scene in nature, stop to look and thank God for it. If you see someone is hurting, try to comfort them. If you see someone who needs a friend, be that friend to them!

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

As we did last week, we are reading today from the Gospel of John. In today's Gospel, the healing of the man born blind invites us to focus on the physical and spiritual aspects of sight and light. In the first part of today's Gospel, we hear Jesus' response to a prevalent belief of his time: that misfortune and disability were the result of sin. That belief is why Jesus is asked the question of whose sin caused the man's blindness—his own or his parents'. Jesus does not answer directly, but instead gives the question an entirely different dimension—through this man's disability, God's power will be made manifest. Jesus then heals the man.

The healing is controversial because Jesus heals on the Sabbath. The Pharisees, the religious authorities of Jesus' time, understood that the law of Moses forbade work (including healing) on the Sabbath. They also have trouble believing that Jesus performed a miracle. To determine whether the man was really born blind, the Pharisees question him and his parents. The man challenges the leaders of the synagogue about their assessment of the good that Jesus has done. In turn, they expel the man for questioning their judgment.

The final revelation and moment of enlightenment comes when the man born blind encounters Jesus again. Having heard the news of his expulsion, Jesus seeks out the man born blind and reveals himself to him as the Son of Man. In this moment, the man born blind shows himself to be a man of faith and worships Jesus. Jesus replies by identifying the irony of the experience of many who encounter Jesus: Those who are blind will now see, and those who think they now see will be found to be blind.

As in last week's Gospel about Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman, today's reading has many allusions to Baptism. The washing of the man in the pool of Siloam is a prototype for Christian Baptism. Through the man's encounter with Jesus, the man born blind is healed, his sight is restored, and his conversion to discipleship begins. The man born blind gradually comes to a greater understanding about who Jesus is and what it means to be his disciple, while the Pharisees (those who should see) are the ones who remain blind.

Loyola Press Sunday Connection

CHECK IT OUT: ARISE FAMILY CONFERENCE



Catholic Family Holiday Festival in Tramore, Co. Waterford.

10th - 13th April 2023. Inviting families to celebrate Easter together and to dive deeper into our relationship with Jesus.

Great talks, Seminars and Workshops. Age appropriate content for children and young people. Evening concerts and a fun social programme. Wonderful celebrations of Holy Mass. Participants can also attend on a day-visitor basis. All combined with an opportunity to holiday in the sunny southeast.

To express interest in attending or for more information go to www.arisefamilyconference.ie



Open the eyes of my heart Lord, I want to see you!

SPIRITUAL BLINDSPOTS

It's hard to imagine what life would be like for someone born blind - to never have seen colour or faces, sunsets or smiles; and especially at the time of Jesus to feel so isolated in society. The Pharisees considered blindness or any affliction like that to be a result of sin - either the person themselves or their parents had sinned and lost God's favour.

Jesus didn't think like that. He knew that wasn't God's way, His way. His heart ached for this man's suffering, and He reached out, in a very physical way in this miracle, and healed him of His blindness. Even though He worked a miracle to restore this man's sight, it was not enough for others to believe in Him, to see Him for who He was, who He is: God Incarnate, the Messiah. The man's sight was restored, but the greater joy was his faith: he believed in Jesus and worshipped Him. Those who had seen all their lives could not see with the eyes of their heart: they closed their eyes and ears to the possibility of the Messiah in their midst. They drove the healed man from their presence and rejected the Healer. How desperately sad! Where would we be in this story? Do we feel we need healing, like the blind man? Do we question Jesus' actions? Are we closed to the idea that He can heal, that He is God of my life? Are we afraid to ask the question? Lord, help us to see!

Physical healings are miraculous, incredible, wonderful! But what about Spiritual healings? a healthy body can still be far from God, His Love and real peace. Take some time over the next few days or weeks to make a good examination of conscience. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you try to remember any areas of your life where you failed in your relationship with God, others or yourself. Find out when your local church has confessions and decide to go. you can pray for the priest in advance too! It's not easy, but it's totally worth it!



- Spiritual Blind Spots (Fr Mike Schmitz)
- Miracles (Jesus Culture)

Check out our *To the Heights Youth Newsletter*



Family Prayer

Lord help me to see clearly the areas of my life that need to change, and to trust in You and Your plan for my life. Amen



EVENTS

Revive the Wonder: 3 part series on the mystery of the Eucharist Tuesdays 14th, 21st, 28th March in St Oliver's Parish Church, Clonmel at 7.30pm with guest presenter each week followed by time of prayer. More info on www.waterfordlismore.ie

Youth 2000 Munster Retreat: St Brendan's College, Killarney, Co. Kerry March 24th - 26th March for ages 16 - 35. More info on www.youth2000.ie

Night Vigil of Eucharistic Adoration and Reparation: Foyer of Charity, Dunmore East, X91 FC65. Sat March 25th @ 8pm - Sun 26th 9.30am, Mass at 10am Sun 26th

Family Day at Holy Family Mission, Sunday 26th March 10am - 3pm. Prayer, Talk, Mass, Music, Fun and Games for all the Family! Bring a packed lunch! Booking is essential: email info@holymission.ie

Catholic Mothers Association: Retreat Day in Glencomeragh House, Saturday 13th May. To book please call Sinead on 086 0528282

Retreat for Men at Holy Family Mission, April 28 - 30. Main speaker Fr Philip Mulryne OP (former Man Utd player). €250 full board accomm. More info: (052) 6133181 / info@holymission.ie

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