

Homily for Sunday, March 22, 2020, the Fourth Sunday of Lent

1st Reading: 1st Samuel 16:1B, 6-7, 10-13A

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 23

2nd Reading Ephesians 5:8-14

Gospel: John 9:1-41

My brothers and sisters, there are many things I could talk about today.

Regarding our nation's - and our world's - exercise in self-isolation, I am reminded of what one of our priests preached about last Sunday. Fr. Aaron talked about the sense of Lent being a retreat. Retreats are positive activities in the Christian faith. We step back, we reassess. And we do this in the context of spending time more intimately speaking with Our Lord.

As others have pointed out, the root word for "quarantine" comes from the Latin word for "forty." In other languages than English - such as Spanish - this holy season is named after the word for 'forty.' Lent is always a time to imagine ourselves as retreating, as quarantining ourselves from distractions - so that we may be with God and realign ourselves more to His life, His will, His mission for us.

Our Gospel passage today provides a rich number of places where we can stop and ponder our faith.

There is the topic of our limitations (our blindness) as opposed to our self-imposed blind-spots.

There is the topic of Christ as our light.

There is the image of Baptism - of being washed clean.

I was going to spend time centering on the pool being called "Siloam" - and how we are given the extra information that the word means "Sent," or "one who is sent." That whole image that Jesus is the Christ, Jesus is the Son of God, sent by the Father. That The One Who Has Been Sent sends the blind man to the pool of "Sent." That the word Apostle means One who is sent.

These are all good things to ask ourselves about. How can I use this time to draw closer to God, and to reach out to those in need? What are my limitations I need Christ to heal? Where are my blind-spots? How has my Baptism called me to a greater life? How can I fulfill the mission on which I have been sent in this environment?

But in the current situation with the Coronavirus, something else stands out. I am hearing the questions, "Is God doing this?" "Why is God doing this?" "What is God telling us?" "Is this the sign that Christ is coming again soon?"

And so **the verse that stands out is, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"**

And the Lord's response to those who asked the question is, **"...it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him.."**

One bishop writes of this passage as follows:

The man born blind represents all of us who are naturally born unable to see God and the world clearly, and who need to be re-created in the waters of Jesus (baptism) so as to receive the healing, saving gift of Himself. That new creation is not the goal of a Christian life; it is really just the beginning. What a beginning it is!"

Christ invites us in the middle of this **to let the works of God be visible to us, and let the works of God be made visible through us.** Christ invites us in the middle of this pandemic to be faithful; to be His Body in the world, by calling others to Faith in Him.

If we look around, we can see He has not left us alone. He is in our midst. He is granting us grace to peacefully bear these burdens. He is with us.

So - look around, see Him, and share him. Spend time with him. And in your own need, also remember to reach out to others for help.

His grace is also here for us to reach out to those who are lonely, alone, or tightening their belts because of a reduced or lost income. Let Christ work in us. In Christ, let **the works of God be made visible through us.**