

Father John's Gospel Reflection



Gospel

GOSPEL – SUNDAY, 26 MARCH, 2017 – FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (John 9:1. 6-9. 13-17. 34-38)

The blind man went off and washed himself and came away with his sight restored.

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 were 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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

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John's Gospel is the last of the four Gospels to be written. It has a developed theology, probably completed 85-95AD, and focuses primarily on Jesus' role as the Son of God rather than on his human aspect.

The Gospel falls into two main sections, traditionally called the Book of Signs (chs 1-12) and the Book of Glory (chs 13-21) The passage 9:1-41 is a long and complicated story, and raises a number of questions. First, the man is blind from birth, and many would regard this malady as a punishment from God for the sins of his parents. Jesus does not enter into this conjecture, but responds by saying he is here to do the works of God, which is the alleviating of all suffering.

In restoring sight to the blind man, we witness a completely unique miracle in the Scriptures - no prophet, priest or apostle ever gave sight to blind eyes, but Jesus did this type of healing more than any other miracle. This opening of the blind was the specific work of the Messiah. (Isaiah 35:5)

People including the Pharisees, question both the mode of healing - mud and spittle; others about it occurring on the Sabbath, others that in freeing a man from the consequences of sin, it would encourage us to sin, because we know we can be cured.

The Pharisees sneer at Jesus, confident in their own spiritual sight - which was blindness, because they could not see the Son of God right in front of them.

I like to look at this miracle as a testimony that Jesus in the Light of the world, can open our eyes to see and appreciate the beauty of our world, the beauty in those about us, and the forgiving and life affirming person and presence of Jesus.

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- Yes, we all grapple with belief in this secular and agnostic culture in which we live.
- Jesus will meet us where we are, welcomes our questioning and will gently lead us to belief.
- Jesus can open our eyes to so much that we take for granted, to so much that we need to appreciate.

Take home Message