

4th Sunday in Lent

Cycle A-2026

Our Gospel reading focuses on the man born physically blind. That got me thinking. We are all born spiritually blind even though we are fundamentally blessed and good because we come from the hands of our loving Creator. It is the blindness of Original Sin that we inherit from the first parents of humanity. It is the blindness that comes from the broken and sinful influence of parents, family members, peers, and society. It is the blindness that comes from our own wounds and personal participation in sin.

Even in all that blindness, I cannot imagine how my faith and relationship with Jesus Christ would have evolved without the positive religious influence of my parents, the church, various people I have known, and particular writers and speakers. In and through these people, Jesus has continually attempted to remove my spiritual blindness and increase my spiritual sight. Human experience consistently reveals that without

these types of positive influences, our faith usually never develops. If it does, it tends to be superficial and lacking in a sense of importance and conviction. As a general rule, we usually don't value it if it has not been modeled and taught. They are a few graced exceptions, but they tend to be quite rare. That is unless we have unexpected spiritual experiences and epiphanies that profoundly opens our eyes to the spiritual beauty of Jesus Christ and His church.

Even if we have been blessed with these positive religious influences, there are three devotions that we can embrace to move from spiritual blindness to spiritual sight. The first devotion is to "look up." By looking up, we keep our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus Christ in the midst of daily living. We strive to see every person and situation with the mind and heart of Jesus. We look up to Him in prayer for love, help, wisdom, and mercy. We look up to Him for the divine truth of the Sacred Scriptures and church teaching. His divine will becomes "a lamp onto our feet and a light onto our path." With this religious knowledge and wisdom, we come to see the difference between good

and evil, even in its most subtle, confusing, and deceptive forms. We grow in our desire and capacity to love God “in all things but above all things.” By looking up, we receive the spiritual sight of living in a manner that helps us to store up abundant treasure in heaven. We still live our earthly lives conscientiously, but with a perspective that is permeated by eternal wisdom and longing.

The second devotion is to “look out.” The Church Father’s of the Second Vatican Council taught that we remain a mystery to ourselves without being in relationship with other people. People can be a mirror for us “to see” the best version of ourselves and “to see” our personal and spiritual potential. They can also be a mirror to help us “to see” the ways that we are personally and spiritually blind. Through the reception of constructive feedback, respectful challenge and observing the effect that our words and actions have on other people, we can embrace the lifelong process of conversion and growth. In doing so, we can see Jesus Christ, our Catholic Christian faith, ourselves, other people, and life itself, with a new pair

of eyes. Eyes that really see the goodness and glory of God. We put on God glasses that provides us with more of a God vision.

We can also overcome our personal and spiritual blindness to the degree we move out of ourselves and towards other people. Do we realize that much of our blindness is related to being overly absorbed with, and consumed, by our own thoughts, feelings, preferences, and selfish desires. The movement from blindness to sight begins and continues with questions such as: How can I go out of myself and become Christ's blessing to another person? How can I love and serve Jesus by loving and serving other people? How can I be His light in their darkness? How can I help someone to see?

Since relationships are meant to be a two-way street, this movement also involves reflecting on and being open to: How can I learn and grow from other people? How can I allow others to be there for me in my darkness? How can they help me "to see" in my blindness? The bottom line is this: We need others, and they need us, in this ongoing movement from

blindness to sight. The key is to surround ourselves with the right people. People who truly care about us and are willing to speak truth to us with loving and kind hearts.

The third devotion is to “look within.” This is probably the most difficult and scary one. Sometimes we will do everything possible to avoid doing so. We look within through reflection on what makes us tick and what triggers us, the overall direction our life is headed, the beliefs and values that guide our lives and decisions, and our real motivation for the things that we “say” and “do.” We then compare the fruits of our reflection to the ultimate standard of the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. Our “looking within” may inspire us to ponder on “why” we seek to follow Jesus Christ, go to church, and help and serve other people? We can also reflect on the present state of our soul by considering “where” we are with God. What are the ways we are being generous and faithful to Jesus? What are the ways that our faith and morality fall outside the revealed will of God through Sacred

Scripture, official church teaching, and the inner nudges of the Holy Spirit?

Our answer to these questions reveal “where” we are, and “who” we are, but only in the present moment. We can always regress, plateau, or evolve. The journey of spiritual blindness to spiritual sight is ever unfolding within us and around us. It is not a straight line of progression. It tends to be “three steps forward and two steps back.” With this pattern, at least we continue to be another step forward into spiritual sight.

The devotion of “looking within” is not meant to be an endless cycle of beating ourselves up and tearing ourselves down. It involves a merciful and honest observation of ourselves. It is an opportunity to celebrate our cooperation with the grace of God. It is an invitation to live a soulful life by being spiritually and morally aware. It is a call to self-knowledge about our blindness and our need for the grace and loving mercy of our Savior. As we do these things, the Lord spiritually holds us in the palm of His hands and looks

upon us with love, as He brings about His healing and enlightening work.

As we continually “look up,” “look out,” and “look within,” the scales will fall from our eyes. We will begin to see growing edges we never recognized; see once again, things we had become blind to; see marvelous things we never saw before; and see even more clearly the things we already see, especially the goodness of God, others, and ourselves. Such is the radiant beauty and transforming power of spiritual sight. As the Lord proclaimed in the Sacred Scriptures: “See, I make all things new.”