

Fourth Sunday of Lent “A” Cycle March 26, 2017

There are 1.3 million people in the United States who are legally blind and 130,000 who are totally blind. Many of these people are very functional. Some marry, start a family, and hold jobs. Others are highly functional such as the Italian singer, Andrea Bocelli. We have a very fine blind priest in our Archdiocese, Father Bill Dean who serves as a chaplain to the Immaculate Heart Sisters in Chester County.

Some of us have known blind people and are amazed at their ability to care for themselves, to move around with the assistance of walking stick or a specially trained dog. Despite these amazing abilities, blind people do suffer from limitations. Although they have accepted their condition and adjusted well, many long for the ability to see. They wonder about the beauty of nature, and mostly the expressions on the faces of their loved ones.

Today’s Scriptures, especially the Gospel, deal with sight, not only physical sight, but also and more importantly spiritual vision, the ability to recognize the presence of God in our midst.

In today’s Gospel, from St. John, Jesus gives physical sight to a man blind from birth. He also gives him the ability to see and recognize him as the Son of God. The way in which Jesus does this is significant. He smears or anoints the blind man’s eyes with a muddy paste, and then tells him to go and wash in the waters of the pool of Siloam. This is a clear reference to the waters of baptisms by which we all come to faith.

Traditionally, another name for the effects of baptism was illumination or enlightenment. Those who come to faith through accepting Jesus as the light of the world are called the enlightened or illumined ones. All of us who have been baptized have also been enlightened. We are enabled to recognize God’s presence in our lives, especially in the person of Jesus Christ, whom we encounter in our prayers, at Mass, in the sacraments, in the faith on one another, and in the Church community.

St. Paul describes the gift of faith in the 2nd reading, from his letter to the Ephesians: “you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.” Again, Paul states: “Christ will give you light.”

This Gospel, proclaimed on this joyful Lenten Sunday, is good news! For centuries, it has been proclaimed to instruct catechumens and candidates coming into the light of faith at Easter. We are blessed and happy to have two in our parish.

It is especially good news for us who have enjoyed the light of faith in Christ from infancy. Like David, in today’s first reading, we have been lovingly chosen by the Lord and anointed by the Holy Spirit.

Especially during this Lenten season, may we let the light of our faith shine forth in the way we worship, pray, live, and treat others. May we also share our faith and gently lead others to the light of faith.