

**Synopsis of Lent IV Sunday [A] homily on Jn 9: 1-41 (L-14)**

**Introduction:** The fourth Sunday of Lent is known as "Laetare (Rejoice) Sunday," expressing the Church's joy in anticipation of the Resurrection of our Lord. Today's readings both remind us that it is God who gives us proper vision in body as well as in soul and instructs us that we should be constantly on our guard against spiritual blindness.

**Scripture lessons:** By describing the anointing of David as the second king of Israel, the first reading, from the book of Samuel, illustrates how blind we are in our judgments and how much we need God's help. In the second reading, St. Paul reminds Christians of their new responsibility as children of light *to live as children of the light, producing every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth.* Presenting the miracle of Jesus' giving of sight to a blind man, today's Gospel, teaches us the necessity of opening the eyes of the mind by faith, and warns us that those who pretend to see the truth are often blind, while those who acknowledge their blindness are given clear vision. In this episode, the most unlikely person, namely the blind man, receives the light of faith in Jesus, while the religion-oriented, law-educated Pharisees remain spiritually blind. To live as a Christian is to see, to have clear vision about God, about ourselves and about others. Our Lenten prayers and sacrifices should serve to heal our spiritual blindness so that we can look into the hearts of others and love them as children of God, our own brothers and sisters.

**Life messages:** 1) We need to allow Jesus to heal our spiritual blindness. We all have blind-spots -- in our marriages, our parenting, our work habits, and our personalities. We often wish to remain in the dark, preferring darkness to light. Even practicing Christians are blind to the poverty, injustice and pain around them. Let us remember, however, that Jesus wants to heal our blind-spots. We need to ask Him to remove from us the root causes of our blindness: namely, self-centeredness, greed, anger, hatred, prejudice, jealousy, addiction to evil habits and hardness of heart. Let us pray with the Scottish Bible scholar William Barclay, "God our Father, help us see Christ more clearly, love him more dearly and follow him more nearly."

2) We need to get rid of cultural blindness. Our culture also has blind-spots. Often it is blind to things like selfless love, happiness, fidelity and true, committed sexual love in marriage, and the value of human life from birth to natural death. Our culture has become anesthetized to the violence, to the sexual innuendo, and to the enormous suffering of the world around us. Let us counteract this cultural blindness by experiencing Jesus dwelling within us and within others through personal prayer, meditative reading of the Bible and a genuine Sacramental life.