

Sunday 4th (A) of Lent

Gospel text (Jn 9,1-41): As Jesus walked along, He saw a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples asked him, «Master, was he born blind because of a sin of his, or of his parents?». Jesus answered, «Neither was it for his own sin nor for his parents. He was born blind so that God's power might be shown in him. While it is day we must do the work of the One who sent me; for the night will come when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world». As Jesus said this, he made paste with spittle and clay and rubbed it on the eyes of the blind man. Then he said, «Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam» (This name means sent.) So he went and washed and came back able to see.

His neighbors and all the people who used to see him begging, wondered. They said, «Isn't this the beggar who used to sit here?». Some said, «It's the one». Others said, «No, but he looks like him». But the man himself said, «I am the one». Then they asked, «How is it that your eyes were opened?». And he answered, «The man called Jesus made a mud paste, put it on my eyes and said to me: 'Go to Siloam and wash'. So I went, and washed, and I could see». They asked, «Where is he?» and the man answered, «I don't know».

The people brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made mud paste and opened his eyes. The Pharisees asked him again, «How did you recover your sight?». And he said, «He put paste on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see». Some of the Pharisees said, «This man is not from God, for he works on the Sabbath»; but others wondered, «How can a sinner perform such miraculous signs?». They were divided and they questioned the blind man again, «What do you think of this man

who opened your eyes?». And he answered, «He is a prophet».

After all this, the Jews refused to believe that the man had been blind and had recovered his sight; so they called his parents and asked them, «Is this your son? You say that he was born blind, how is it that he now sees?». The parents answered, «He really is our son and he was born blind; but how it is that he now sees, we don't know, neither do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him, he is old enough. Let him speak for himself». The parents said this because they feared the Jews who had already agreed that whoever confessed Jesus to be the Christ was to be expelled. Because of this his parents said, «He is old enough, ask him».

So a second time the Pharisees called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, «Tell us the truth; we know that this man is a sinner». He replied, «I don't know whether he is a sinner or not; I only know that I was blind and now I see». They said to him, «What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?». He replied, «I have told you already and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?». Then they started to insult him. «Become his disciple yourself! We are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man we don't know where he comes from». The man replied, «It is amazing that you don't know where the man comes from, and yet he opened my eyes! We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but if anyone honors God and does his will, God listens to him. Never, since the world began, has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person who was born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing». They answered him, «You were born a sinner and now you teach us!" And they expelled him».

Jesus heard that they had expelled him. He found him and said,

«Do you believe in the Son of Man?». He answered, «Who is he, that I may believe in him?». Jesus said, «You have seen him and he is speaking to you. He said, «Lord, I believe»; and he worshiped him. Jesus said, «I came into this world to carry out a judgment: Those who do not see shall see, and those who see shall become blind». Some Pharisees stood by and asked him, «So we are blind?». And Jesus answered, «If you were blind, you would not be guilty. Now you say: ‘We see’; this is the proof of your sin».

«Go and wash»

+ Fr. Joan Ant. MATEO i García
(Trep, Lleida, Spain)

Today, in the Fourth Sunday of Lent —also called rose or “laetare” (rejoice) Sunday— all the liturgy invites us to experience a deep joy, a great exultation, because Easter is getting nearer.

Jesus was a factor of great joy for that man who had been blind from birth, and who received his eyesight from Him along with the gift of his spiritual light. The blind believed and he received Christ's light. On the other hand, those Pharisees, so engulfed in their own wisdom and light, remained blinded because of their heart hardness and their sins. In fact, «they refused to believe that the man had been blind and had recovered his sight» (Jn 9:18).

How essential it is Christ's light to face reality in its right true dimension! Without the light of faith we should be almost blind. We have been bestowed with Christ's light and we need our life to go on being enlightened by this light. Even more so, this light must flare in the sanctity of life so that it may appeal to those who are still unaware of it. All this means conversion and personal growth in Charity. Especially in this time of Lent and in this final stage. St. Leo the Great exhorts us: «Although, it is always good to exercise ourselves in the virtue of Charity, these days of Lent invite us to, in a more urgent manner».

One unique thing can move us away from the light and joy Jesus Christ gives us, and this is sin; trying to live far from Lord's light. Unfortunately, many —at times, even ourselves— go deeply into this dark and gloomy road until losing the light and

peace. Out of his own experience, St. Augustine, claimed that there is nothing unhappier than the happiness of those who sin.

Easter is getting near and the Lord wants to communicate us all the joy of Resurrection. Let us prepare ourselves to receive and celebrate it. «Go and wash» (Jn 9:7), Jesus tells us... To wash in the purifying waters of the Sacrament of Penance! We shall find again the light and the joy and we shall better accomplish our best preparation for Easter.