Fourth Sunday of Lent (A)

Gospel text (*Jn* 9:1-41): As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam" —which means Sent—. So he went and washed, and came back able to see.

His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, "Isn't this the one who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is," but others said, "No, he just looks like him." He said, "I am." So they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?" He replied, "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went there and washed and was able to see." And they said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I don't know."

They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees. Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a Sabbath. So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see." So some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a sinful man do such signs?" And there was a division among them. So they said to the blind man again, "What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

Now the Jews did not believe that he had been blind and gained his sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained his sight. They asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How does he now see?" His parents answered and said, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. We do not know how he sees now, nor do we know who

opened his eyes. Ask him, he is of age; he can speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone acknowledged him as the Christ, he would be expelled from the synagogue. For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; question him."

So a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner." He replied, "If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see." So they said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?" They ridiculed him and said, "You are that man's disciple; we are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is from." The man answered and said to them, "This is what is so amazing, that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him. It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything." They answered and said to him, "You were born totally in sin, and are you trying to teach us?" Then they threw him out.

When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered and said, "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, the one speaking with you is he." He said, "I do believe, Lord," and he worshiped him. Then Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind."

Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not also blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, 'We see,' so your sin remains.

"Go wash"

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Today, on the fourth Sunday of Lent, known as "Rejoice Sunday," the entire liturgy invites us to experience a profound joy, a great happiness for the approaching Easter.

Jesus was the cause of great joy for the blind man to whom he gave physical sight and spiritual light. The blind man believed and received the light of Christ. In contrast, those Pharisees who believed themselves to be in wisdom and light, remained blind due to their hardness of heart and sin. In fact, "The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and gained his sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained his sight" (Jn 9:18).

How necessary is the light of Christ for us to see reality in its true dimension! Without the light of faith, we would be practically blind. We have received the light of Jesus Christ and our entire lives need to be illuminated by this light. Furthermore, this light must shine forth in the holiness of life so that it attracts many who still do not know it. All of this means conversion and growth in charity, especially during this time of Lent and in this last stage. Saint Leo the Great exhorts us: "Although every time is good for exercising the virtue of charity, these days of Lent invite us to do so more urgently."

Only one thing can keep us away from the light and joy that Jesus Christ gives us, and that thing is sin, the desire to live far from the Lord's light. Unfortunately, many, sometimes even ourselves, enter this dark path and lose the light and peace. Saint Augustine, drawing from his own experience, affirmed that there is nothing more unhappy than the happiness of those who sin.

Easter is near, and the Lord wants to communicate all the joy of the Resurrection to us. Let us prepare ourselves to receive and celebrate it. Jesus tells us: "Go, wash yourself" (cf. Jn 9:7). Let us wash ourselves in the purifying waters of the sacrament of Penance! There we will find light and joy, and we will make the best preparation for Easter.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Therefore receive the likeness of God, which you lost through evil deeds.” (Saint Augustine)

- “Because of Adam’s sin we too are born “blind”. Sin wounded humanity and destined it to the darkness of death, but the newness of life shines out in Christ, as well as the destination to which we are called.” (Benedict XVI)

- “Often Jesus asks the sick to believe. He makes use of signs to heal: spittle and the laying on of hands, mud and washing. The sick try to touch him, ‘for power came forth from him and healed them all’ (Lk 6:19) and so in the sacraments Christ continues to "touch" us in order to heal us.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church,

№ 1504)