

Homily for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year A, March 22, 2020
Fr. Travers

As we face the Coronavirus and are forced to spend quiet time alone or with our loved ones, the readings for this Sunday give us an opportunity to ponder some basic questions.

Did you ever wonder why God made you, you? To live at this particular time in history, in this particular country, with this particular family and with these particular events, both good and bad, that so shaped your life? I know I have!

In the readings for this Sunday, God's ways seem so different than our ways. For example, in the Book of Samuel, our first reading, we are told that, "Man sees the appearance, but the Lord looks into the heart." We are told that God chose David as a successor of King Saul to be the new king of Israel and God chose the man born blind to see and become a disciple and yes, God chose me to be me.

With this as a background, now let us focus our attention on the Gospel reading.

We all know the story well — Jesus cured the man born blind. The reading goes on with the disciples asking Jesus who sinned — the blind man or his parents? Jesus answers: "*neither.*" His blindness will lead to sight so that Jesus's power might be seen at work in him because Jesus is the Light of the World. Look at the dramatic way Jesus heals the man ... he cannot see — so Jesus makes a paste out of mud and anoints his eyes with it and then sends him away to wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam and then the blind man begins to see. *I think we can see this as a reference to baptism when we were anointed, washed in the baptismal font and received the eyes of faith.*

Next, I want to focus today on the 4 interrogations that follow the blind man's reception of sight. His responses and then our possible responses to similar questions. We see great growth in this man's faith as he confesses that Jesus is the man who healed him. He goes on to say Jesus is a prophet, then the messiah, then the Son of God and finally the newly sighted man himself becomes a disciple. Something similar happens to us after our own baptism. As we mature, we too grow in our belief in Jesus and become committed disciples, too.

First interrogation – the friends and neighbors of the man born blind admit that this is really their old friend and that he was blind and now sees. Do my friends and neighbors witness that I am a person who sees, that is, I am a witness to Christ?

Second interrogation- the Pharisees are suspicious of the whole affair. They only see Jesus healing on the Sabbath which is against the Mosaic Law, therefore Jesus must be a sinner. They are blind to who Jesus is. Do I admit that I, too, have blind spots in my life, particularly when I fail to see goodness in myself and others?

Third interrogation - the cross exam of the blind man's family. The Pharisees hope to break the blind man's story . They don't believe the man was born blind and so they interrogate the parents. The parents are filled with fear and so take the easy way out and say: "*Ask him.*" They don't want to get involved for it might cost too much! How would I react if I was cross examined on my faith in Christ?

Fourth interrogation - the blind man is questioned a second time. Now the Pharisees want to turn him against Jesus. They ask him to repeat his story, looking for loopholes in it. In this scene, the blind man sees and the Pharisees are blind for they close their eyes to what really happened. Like the Pharisees, how many times have I been blind and failed to see?

Sometimes I think I know everything and I am blind to God working in others and myself?

To conclude:

We have to use the eyes of faith to see the meaning of life. That is to answer for ourselves the basic questions of life, such as: Who am I, how do I make sense of my life? How do I deal with suffering and pain? Do I grasp the mystery that God deeply loves me for being me? And that God has chosen me just as He chose David as King of Israel and the man born blind and God chose me to be the wonderful person I am called to be? Isn't this the reason why we have our annual Lenten journey to scrutinize ourselves? Am I blind or do I really see?

So take this time of being quieted down due to the Coronavirus to reflect on just who I am. Have a good week!