

Our Faith on Sunday

GOSPEL REFLECTION



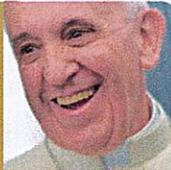
In this Sunday's gospel Jesus gives sight to the man who was blind from birth. His is a physical blindness, but we also encounter the spiritual blindness of the

Pharisees which Jesus condemns because they are convinced that they can see. There is a physical blind spot located on the retina at the back of the eye but we can also speak of a spiritual blind spot; and the more we deny its existence, the more we confirm its presence. And since I cannot see my own blind spot, I must open myself to Jesus who alone can remove it. Jesus came into the world so that "those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind". With the latter it is a self-inflicted blindness caused by spiritual pride; the pride of those who can see the speck in the eye of their neighbour but refuse to see the log in their own eye. At the beginning of this gospel account the disciples wanted to know from Jesus what sin caused the man to be born blind. At the end of the passage Jesus makes it clear that the real sin is the presumption of being

without sin and therefore of rejecting the light who came into the world. It is like saying: "I can already see so what do I need the light for". Lent is the time to come to terms with the fact that we are all spiritually born blind. Is not this the cause of all the wars that have been with us from the dawn of history? Wasn't this the reason why Cain could not see that he was his brother's keeper? Let us ask God in this Lenten season to open our eyes so that we can see every neighbour as a brother or sister to be loved as God loves each one of us.



POPE FRANCIS' ENCYCLICAL FRATELLI TUTTI BROTHERS AND SISTERS ALL



THE ULTIMATE FOUNDATION

275. It should be acknowledged that "among the most important causes of the crises of the modern world are a desensitized human conscience, a distancing from religious values and the prevailing individualism accompanied by materialistic philosophies that deify the human person and introduce worldly and material values in place of supreme and transcendental principles".²⁶⁴ It is wrong when the only voices to be heard in public debate are those of the powerful and "experts". Room needs to be made for reflections born of religious traditions that are the repository of centuries of experience and wisdom. For "religious classics can prove meaningful in every age; they have an enduring power [to open new horizons, to stimulate thought, to expand the mind and the heart]". Yet often they are viewed with disdain as a result of "the myopia of a certain rationalism".²⁶⁵

264. Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, Abu Dhabi (4 February 2019); L'Osservatore Romano, 4-5 February 2019, p. 6.

265. Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium (24 November 2013), 256; AAS 105 (2013), 1123.

Jubilee of Seminarians

Meditation Pope Benedict XVI Angelus

2 March 2008

Let us reflect briefly on the account of the man born blind (Jn 9: 1-41). According to the common mentality of the time, the disciples take it for granted that his blindness was the result of a sin committed by him or his parents. Jesus, however, rejects this prejudice and says: "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him" (Jn 9: 3). What comfort these words offer us! They let us hear the living voice of God, who is provident and wise Love! In the face of men and women marked by limitations and suffering, Jesus did not think of their possible guilt but rather of the will of God who created man for life. And so he solemnly declares: "We must work the works of him who sent me.... As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (Jn 9: 5)... Dear brothers and sisters, let us allow ourselves to be healed by Jesus, who can and wants to give us God's light!



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her.
Be joyful, all who were in mourning;
exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.**

Cf. Is 66: 10-11

GOSPEL

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

John 9:1-41

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.*(Shorter form)*

At that time: As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar were saying, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'It is he.' Others said, 'No, but he is like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' So they said to him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." So I went and washed and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.' Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?' And there was a division among them. So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?' He said, 'He is a prophet.'

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, 'Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?' His parents answered, 'We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.' His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, 'Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.' He answered, 'Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He answered them, '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?' And they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' The man answered, 'Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshipper of 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 man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' They answered him, 'You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?' And they cast him out.

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Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?' Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.' He said, 'Lord, I believe', and he worshipped him. Jesus said, 'For judgement I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.' Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, 'Are we also blind?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, "We see", your guilt remains.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

We place before you with joy these offerings,
which bring eternal remedy, O Lord,
praying that we may both faithfully revere them
and present them to you, as is fitting,
for the saManchesterManIvment of all the world.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Cf. Jn 9:11,38

**The Lord anointed my eyes: I went, I washed,
I saw and I believed in God.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world,
illuminate our hearts, we pray,
with the splendour of your grace,
that we may always ponder
what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty
and love you in all sincerity.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God, who through your Word
reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way,
grant, we pray,
that with prompt devotion and eager faith
the Christian people may hasten
toward the solemn celebrations to come.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.**FIRST READING**

A reading from the Book of Samuel. 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

In those days: The Lord said to Samuel, 'Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.' When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.' But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.' And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen these.' Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.' And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the Lord said, 'Arise, anoint him, for this is he.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.**PSALM**

Psalm 23(22):1-3a. 3b-4. 5. 6. R.1

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me;
he revives my soul.

He guides me along the right path,
for the sake of his name.
Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
no evil would I fear, for you are with me.
Your crook and your staff will give me comfort.

You have prepared a table before me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for length of days unending.

SECOND READING

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians. Ephesians 5:8-14

Brothers and Sisters: At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true, and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, 'Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.**ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL**

John 8:12

**Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.
I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
whoever follows me will have the light of life.
Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.**