

## HOMILY FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT year a

1. Tend to take our senses for granted- ability to see seems such a natural reality
  - a. Depend on sight for most learning, difficult to imagine not being able to see
  - b. sight is much more complicated than we often think
  - c. Experience where you misplace something like keys and are looking for them
  - d. Look everywhere can think of and do not see them
  - e. Somebody else looks and they see them immediately
  - f. We even looked in that place and did not see them
  - g. Fresh eyes without expectations tend to see more clearly
  - h. Not just with sight, our expectations govern a lot of our experiences
2. This governs our sense of right and wrong, which we see in the gospel
  - a. We expect an orderly universe, those who do wrong should be punished, those who do good should be rewarded
  - b. So the disciples see a man blind from birth, terrible evil especially in such a physical culture
  - c. Whose fault is it, his or his parents
    - i. If someone is to blame, then maybe we can avoid similar affliction
    - ii. Also do not feel as responsible for caring for person, if they caused problem
  - d. Jesus answer is that it is neither one's fault, it is part of the condition of creation
    - i. Wounded by sin, tragic things may happen
3. But it is also an opportunity for God's works to be made visible
  - a. Jesus physically makes mud and smears it on the man's eyes
  - b. Tells him to go wash in the pool of Siloam
  - c. As he obeys, Jesus leaves the area, and when the man returns he can see
  - d. Neighbors and acquaintances are surprised and shocked
  - e. Never heard before that a man born blind would come to see
  - f. This becomes the occasion for great discussion, how could this have happened
  - g. Washing in the pool of Siloam, name which means sent, has references to baptism
    - i. Especially since in the early church, baptism was called illumination
    - ii. When a person encounters Christ in faith and commits himself in baptism, he or she is filled with the light of the Holy Spirit
4. We see this happening in the blind man, not only does he physically gain sight, he has a growing understanding of Jesus as he is challenged by the Pharisees
  - a. The problem the Pharisees is that they are blinded by their own expectations
  - b. They have boxed God in, He has to work according to their own understanding
  - c. They have defined work as doing anything physical, so healing a blind man must be work
  - d. Only a sinner will publicly do work on a Sabbath

- e. They work really hard to try to deny that God might be working through Jesus
  - f. The man must not have been blind, Jesus must be sinner but then He could not have done that work
  - g. As they work harder at rejecting the man, he comes to acknowledge even more strongly, that Jesus is a prophet, that he is from God and finally worships Jesus as the Son of Man
5. Like the Pharisees, we have our expectations about where we are with God
- a. We find comfortable practices that should be good enough for us to get into heaven
  - b. Comfort is something we often desire, even though physically, spiritually and emotionally it is probably the worst thing we can get
6. God is a God of surprises
- a. Just when we think we have life figured out, God may throw a curve at us
  - b. A relationship might fail, a loved one might die, a person may come into our life
  - c. We may lose a job or a new but challenging opportunity may arise
  - d. We could be faced with make a choice between making a large income but having to act in immoral or unethical behavior to do so
  - e. We could be forced to choose between spending more time on building a career or developing relationships with family
  - f. Experiences feel random as if we are in a pinball machine being bounced from place to place
  - g. They can also be opportunities for us to open our eyes, to see how experiences and decisions can be a part of God's plan
  - h. Even the worst experience like being born blind can be an opportunity to find God laying his hands on us, healing us and helping us to see him face to face
7. Rather than complaining about painful experiences or fears about our future, God may be inviting us to discover His presence in our life
- a. Perhaps the most amazing thing about God, he has a way of taking even the most tragic events, even death, and bringing new life even resurrection out of them