

Today we have the story of the cure of the blind man.

To the people of that day the question was, “Who sinned; he or his parents?” They believed disabilities were caused by sin.

- **It really has not changed much in our day. Take racism or poverty. We often blame the person or their family or race for their struggles. But some see it differently. They see the challenges in society as an opportunity to bring fullness and healing to those who are broken and forgotten. For instance, the youth in our city.**
- **Mayor Duggan in his State of the City talk:**
 - **College education for youth who complete high school**
 - **Transportation route for ten schools and after school program (funded for five years)**
 - **Soccer beginning in our community (discipline and possible scholarships)**

Jesus was dealing with the same kind of question. Others say that the man’s blindness was due to his sins or that of his parents. He says neither he nor his parents have sinned; rather it is so that the glory of God may be revealed.

Then he smears mud on his eyes and cures him.

(pause)

I have a question for all you scripture scholars. Which book of the Bible does Jesus' cure of the blind man remind you of?

(Open it up for responses)

The healing of the blind man in today's gospel is a meditation on the creation stories in the Book of Genesis.

1. In the first creation story (Genesis, chapter 1) we see God separating of light from darkness.
2. (Read Gen 1:1-4)
3. Isn't that what Jesus is doing in today's gospel? He brings light to the blind man's eternal darkness.
4. Then in Genesis 2:7 God takes mud from the earth, fashions it into a human being and breathes the breath of life into him. "And man becomes a living being." Just so, with the blind man in today's gospel, Jesus also makes mud and smears it on the eyes of the blind man and he becomes a healed living being.
5. In the first two chapters of the Book of Genesis, God is busy creating the world;
in today's gospel, Jesus is busy finishing the work of creation by healing the blind man.

God had not completed his work. God could not rest.

Jesus is not resting; he is completing the work of creation because he is God.

The Pharisees who live by the law of Moses do not understand this. To them Jesus is a mere man breaking the Sabbath law by working on the Sabbath.

(pause)

Now, at first, the man born blind also does not see clearly who Jesus is. But he is open to learn. Like the Samaritan woman at the well in last week's gospel, he is sent as a witness to who Jesus is. His cure of physical sight is immediate. But his growth in faith in Jesus is gradual.

- **When he is first questioned by the Pharisees about what happened, he simply says, "He opened my eyes!"**
- **When questioned a second time, he says Jesus is a prophet.**
- **Then when the blind man is questioned more deeply, he asks, "Do you want to become one of his disciples?"**
- **And finally, when the Pharisees claim that God has spoken through Moses who gave us the Law and this "Jesus" has broken the Sabbath law by curing him on the Sabbath, he replies, "Never since the world began has anyone cured a man born blind!"**

(pause)

I would like to talk with you about faith, not the blind man's faith, but about your faith, about my faith. I don't know about you but I have what I would call a "lazy" faith. I have never had any profound experiences like the blind man or like St. Paul when he was knocked to the ground by God. No, mine is a lazy faith... a faith handed on to me by my parents which came from their parents and from their parents.

When someone asks me when I decided to be a priest, I am almost embarrassed to say that it was such a gradual thing. I just grew into it. It is the same thing for my faith. My faith became personal and dominant in my life very gradually. It has taken over 70 Lenten seasons, seventy times to "take 40" and gradually let the love of God invade the faith so carefully handed on to me by my family and faith community. I guess that I am just realizing that God is not done the creation process with me. Slowly he leads us to communion with him. Slowly as we open our hearts he says to us as he did to the man born blind, "You have seen him. He who is speaking to you is he". Then, and oh so slowly and gradually, then we can say with the man born blind, "Lord, I believe, and bow down and worship.