



# He Speaks: Finding Christ in the Days of Lent

## Fourth Sunday of Lent

Readings: 1 Samuel 16:1b, 607, 10-13a, Psalm 23:103a, 3b-4, 5, 6, Ephesians 5:8-14, John 9:1-41

"You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he."

The story of the man born blind stands in contrast to last Sunday's Gospel story. They were just passing by the man. He didn't call out. He wasn't seeing Jesus. He wasn't asking for healing. He was just there.

And yet Jesus, looking at him, said, "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."

Then, curiously, Jesus spat, made mud, and wiped it on the man's eyes. He told him to go rinse, and when he did, he could see. And that could have been the end of the story. Another successful, but maybe weird, healing.

But you know—that wasn't the end of the story.

Neighbors thought it was a case of mistaken identity and dragged him to the Pharisees. They interrogated him, which led to mass confusion and dissension. The parents were called in. They identified him, but then washed their hands of it. All along, the man born blind kept repeating the facts: I don't know who it was or why he did it, but I do know that I was blind and now I see, and oh yes, by the way, I'm pretty sure the guy was devout and doing God's will. And with that, they sent him away.

And this is where it gets interesting. Jesus heard that the Pharisees had thrown the guy out, so he found him and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" And the man born blind replied, "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" He wasn't getting any answers from the Pharisees, after all.

"You have seen him, the one speaking with you is he."

Jesus' healing of the man born blind reminds us that the work of Jesus often goes unseen until we fully recognize him—indeed, true sight goes beyond physical vision. Lent invites us to open our eyes *and our hearts*, to look for Jesus even when it's unexpected, and to allow ourselves to

be fully transformed by encountering Him. Like the man born blind, our faith deepens when we see Him clearly—and worship is the natural response.

Consider:

When the man washed the mud off his eyes, he could see—after all, he "came back able to see" so he clearly saw Jesus. But it wasn't until his encounter with the Lord after his testimony to the Pharisees that he really knew who had healed him and who was speaking with him. Have there been times in your life when Jesus was working but you didn't realize it until later? What was your response when you knew?

Whisper Prayer:

Jesus, open my eyes to you.

## Listening with the Church — Fourth Sunday of Lent

### Laetare Sunday

Today is Laetare Sunday, from the Latin *laetare*, meaning "rejoice!" The theme comes from the entrance antiphon: "Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast." (Isaiah 66:10-11)

It is a day to be strengthened in hope, preparing for Good Friday and Holy Saturday, and to look forward to the joy that awaits us at Easter.

During Lent, the church does not allow flowers on the altar as a sign of the penitential season, but this rule is suspended on Laetare Sunday—so you may see rose colored flowers on the altar, in addition to the rose vestments of your priest.

In the midst of your Lent sacrifices, fasts, and penances, it is a day to remember that the Easter celebration is coming. Take a moment—alone or with family—to reflect on five (or more) things that bring you joy, and thank God for them.