

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT—YEAR A

We are half way through our Lenten journey. On the first Sunday, we accompanied Jesus into the desert where He was tempted. On the second Sunday, we accompanied Him to the mountain where He was transfigured. On the third Sunday, we sat with Jesus at the well. Today, we are with Jesus giving sight to a man born blind.

What is common in all these? Jesus reveals Himself as the divine person, the son of God. The devil took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple and said, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. The angels will protect you.” To that Jesus said, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.” At transfiguration, they heard the voice of the Father, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him.” The woman at the well said, “I know that the Messiah is coming. When he comes he will tell us everything.” Jesus responded, “I am He, the one who is speaking with you.” In the gospel of today, Jesus asks the blind man, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” The man answered, “Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus said, “You have seen Him. The one who is speaking with you is He.”

Jesus healing the man born blind is one of the seven miracles performed by Jesus mentioned in the beginning of John’s gospel. John does not use the word “miracle.” Instead, he calls them “signs” because for John they point to something else. Signs are not ends in themselves. They point to something beyond. Jesus performing the sign of healing the blind man points to Jesus, the Son of God—Jesus the light of the world. “While I am in the world, I am the light of the world,” says Jesus in the gospel of today. Today, *we* are the light of the



world. What kind of light are you? A light that is about to go out? A light that is afraid to speak the truth?

The man in today’s gospel was blind from birth.

Jesus’ disciples questioned him to see why he

was blind. Was it because of his sins or the sins of his parents? But Jesus’ response was, “Neither.” It was to reveal the glory of God.

Jesus healed the man in three steps. Jesus spat on the dust, made clay with saliva, and smeared that on the eyes of this man. He could have healed him by saying a word. But Jesus made clay with saliva—reminding the Jews of their traditional belief that God created Adam by spitting on the dust, making the clay, and breathing the breath of life. Jesus is revealing that He is God. Then the man was asked to wash with the water in the pool of Siloam. It is a reminder of baptism.

Jesus healed this man and gave him sight. Jesus gave him not only the light of day but also the light of faith. We see this man coming to the fullness of faith. At first the man’s response was, “The man called Jesus healed me.” When the Pharisees questioned him a second time, the man said, “He is a prophet.” Questioned again, the man said, “He is from God.” Finally, when Jesus asked the man if he believed in the Son of Man, the man said, “I do believe” and worshipped him.” Thus, the man was healed physically and spiritually. He saw with his physical eyes and with the eyes of faith. But the scribes and the Pharisees, who had the physical eyesight, became blind to the presence of the Son of Man. It is with the eyes of faith that we see Christ present—body and blood, soul and divinity—in the Eucharist. Let us continue our catechesis on the Eucharist, deepening our understanding and love for the Eucharist.