

Much more than giving sight to the man born blind, this gospel story is about a journey of faith. The blind man's story is our story.

Often when I have read this gospel, I am left with a question...

What was wrong with the neighbors, and the pharisees, and even the parents of this man that they didn't rejoice with him? The neighbors knew who he was – they saw him begging. His parents could have said, "yes, our son was born blind and we are so happy that now he sees." The Pharisees even try to talk the man out of his own reality. What was wrong with them?

They suffer from what we all have and that is blind spots. We all have blind spots.

Even Samuel in our first reading has a blind spot – he is ready to anoint the obvious person, Jesse's eldest son. I think the difference between Samuel and the pharisees, parents and neighbors in the gospel is that Samuel was able to be open to possibilities, to seeing the event and the anointing differently. Samuel was listening to the One who sent him and not just what Samuel thought and saw was right. Blind spots prevent us from seeing the truth about ourselves and our world. Blind spots are a protection for us so that we don't need to change.

The neighbors were more interested in trying to be the first to have the real scoop. They don't even recognize the miracle of sight that had taken place. Gossip is the blind spot for the neighbors.

The pharisees are more interested in the law. How and from whom did he gain sight? It's the Sabbath you know. The law is the law. Keeping the law is the blind spot for the pharisees.

The parents are afraid and fear paralyzed them. What would they do if they were put out of the synagogue? They wouldn't even get involved in a conversation about him. They can't celebrate with their son who now has the hope of a new life. Being afraid was their blind spot.

Personal blind spots can be serious impediments to our spiritual growth. Blind spots can keep us mired in our own dark world. Narrow-mindedness, biases of perception, fear, our need to control, doubt. We have blind spots because we don't like to risk our comfort and security. We like being in our comfort zones. It takes a risk to change and change is sometimes costly to us. (Not monetarily costly.) We have blind spots because we prefer the darkness rather than the light. And you can surely name your own blind spots.

To get rid of blind spots - We need to be honest, primarily about ourselves. We have to lay down our defenses, our rationalizations, our side of the story. We need to tell the truth about who we are. To get rid of blind spots - We have to admit that we don't always make good choices. self-serving. We have to be willing to love our enemies or to forgive those who have injured us.

Remember blind spots are whatever is preventing you from seeing the wonders of our God on our journey of faith.

The blind man's story is our story. What can the man born blind teach us?

He had lived in darkness all his life. Without being asked Jesus sends him to the pool to wash.

That alone was a big risk for the blind man. He took a chance. He received his sight.

The outward gift of sight was coupled with an inner transformation.

He now has new found courage. He reacts with unprecedented boldness when he is questioned by his neighbors and the pharisees. The man is free to be completely loyal to the reality that he has experienced. He is free to respond to the new things that God is doing and revealing to him. The man had gone from being blind, to having physical sight and then to an even deeper sight - he sees with his own eyes who the healer was - the Son of Man, Jesus the Christ.

Today's gospel is deliberately used when preparing people to be received into the church, because it spells out what it means to be baptized and a disciple. The man who use to sit and beg became a disciple of Jesus not because he was given sight. No, he becomes a disciple because he came face to face with Jesus. Our elect and candidates - Zach, Beth, Ray, Melinda, Kelly, Tim, and Curt, have been invited to the pool. Jesus has invited all of us to the pool. That's why we have Lent every year. So that we can all go to the pool and then be ready to renew our commitment to the Light of the World on Easter. Those waters will wash away our blind spots so that we can see the marvelous things that our God does every single day.

And like the man who once was blind, we can say: Lord, I do believe.