

PROCLAIMING CHRIST

Meditations for the Season of Lent

“The Holy Spirit helps us to view others with fresh eyes, seeing them always as brothers and sisters in Jesus, to be respected and loved.”

— POPE FRANCIS ON TWITTER



DID YOU KNOW?

- Making the sign of the cross with holy water when entering a church is a renewal of our baptism and a cleansing of venial sin.
- *Laetare Sunday*, which is today, marks the halfway point during Lent. Priests wear rose-colored vestments as a reminder that Easter is coming.
- The feast of the Annunciation is March 25.



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Spiritual Sight

John 9:1–41

In today's Gospel Jesus gives sight to a man who was born blind. As the man repeatedly tells the story of how Jesus healed him physically, there is a gradual change in the man's understanding of who Jesus is. He sees Jesus first as a man, and then as a prophet, and then as someone who came from God. Finally, he falls to his knees and worships Jesus as the Lord. This man went from being blind to receiving physical sight to seeing through the eyes of faith.

The religious leaders who were questioning this man had physical sight, but they had no spiritual sight. They were blinded by prejudice, pride, fear, and animosity toward Jesus.

Spiritual sight allows us to recognize the presence of God in our

FOR REFLECTION

- › How have you experienced spiritual sight?
- › Are there things in your life that make you spiritually blind?
- › What can you do during Lent to follow more closely in the footsteps of Christ?

lives and in the lives of people around us. We strive to love unconditionally as Christ loves.

Spiritual sight is a gift that flows from our relationship with Christ and our deep desire to follow in his footsteps. Once we have received the gift of spiritual sight, nothing is ever the same.

What Do You See?

It's only the Fourth Sunday of Lent. You still have three weeks to bring your spiritual sight into sharper focus. Maybe you need to forgive someone. Maybe you need to seek forgiveness. Maybe you need to experiment with new prayer forms. Are there virtues you need to cultivate? Vices you need to tame? Good intentions that need to be acted upon? We are all called to follow more closely in the footsteps of Jesus. What does that mean in your life? What sacrifices will it entail? How will you begin?



CatechismCONNECTION

"The Lord asks us to love as he does, even our *enemies*, to make ourselves the neighbor of those farthest away, and to love children and the poor as Christ himself."

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1825

Family Focus



Help your children understand that many children are less fortunate. Light a candle at church this week for children who are sick or hungry. Take the kids grocery shopping and bring the food to your parish pantry or a local food bank. Clean out closets and donate gently used items. Search "Catholic Missions" on the internet. Then pick one mission and decide as a family how you can help by sending money, clothing, or supplies.

Reaching Out to Those in Need



Our greatest temptation when faced with people in need is to look away. But when we look away, we turn our backs on Christ himself. Jesus assures us that when we feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and visit the prisoner, we do these things for him (see Mt 25:31-41).

We all know people who have suffered a death in the family, serious illness, divorce, a job loss, or some other personal tragedy. We have heard shocking stories of violence, oppression, poverty, prejudice, and abuse in our communities and in our world. Maybe you know of people who have been affected by twists of fate, natural disasters, accidents, or injuries. We can't stop bad things from happening. But we can find ways to reach out to people in need. Promise yourself that for the remainder of Lent you will go out of your way to help someone every day.

Lenten Prayer

Our prayer this week is a reflection from St. Teresa of Avila:

"Christ has no body now on earth but yours; no hands but yours; no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which the compassion of Christ must look out on the world. Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which he is to bless his people."

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