

Weekly Gospel Readings
The 6th Sunday of the Holy Lent
Healing the Man Born Blind

Today we start the sixth week of the Holy fast. Next Sunday, with the Lord entering Jerusalem, we will start the Holy Pascha Week journey. This is the week where we immerse ourselves in the last days of Christ's public ministry on earth, leading up to His crucifixion and resurrection.

On this Sunday, the sixth Sunday of the Great Fast, the Church reads [John 9:1-41](#). In this chapter, Jesus heals a man born blind whom Christ testified that “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him” ([Jn. 9:3](#)). For this week’s commentary, we will focus on three aspects of this story: the *power* of our Lord Jesus Christ, the *obedience* of the blind man, and the *stubbornness* of the Pharisees.

Towards the beginning of the chapter, the disciples began to question whose sin caused the man to be born blind. Jesus replied that God allowed blindness with a higher purpose, to show both His presence among men and His power. As St. Augustine said “was he then born without original sin, or had he committed no sin during his lifetime? Both this man and his parents had sinned, but that sin itself was not the reason why he was born blind. Our Lord gives the reason why, “That the works of God should be made known in him.””

Jesus approaches the blind man, spits on the ground, and smears dirt on his face. How do you think the blind man felt at this moment? Probably embarrassed, upset, and depressed. However, despite this seeming act of disrespect towards him, the blind man is rewarded for his obedience. As St. John Chrysostom explains, “He was obedient in every way. He did not say: ‘If the mud and spit will truly heal me, why do I need to go to Siloam? Or, if I need to go to Siloam, why is there a need for clay? Why does He anoint me with (clay)? He did not think of these matters, as he was ready to do one thing only: he was prepared to obey completely the one who commanded him, and he was not inclined to do anything to oppose Him.” All logic would have told the man to not go to Siloam and wash. Why would he listen to a man who he never knew, who just embarrassed him by smearing clay on his face? Yet, the blind man relies on faith rather than logic and is rewarded for being obedient to the Lord.

The miracle of healing the man born blind upset the Pharisees. First, Jesus healed the blind man on Saturday and violated the Sabbath commandment. Then, they did not know how to believe that a “sinner” and a “transgressor” of the Sabbath can do such a wonderful work of God! The prejudices of religious leaders blinded them from understanding Jesus’ assertion that He is the One, sent from the Father to bring people freedom and light. However, the cured man did understand that only someone sent from God could perform such a miracle. When asked by the Lord if he believes He is the son of God, he replies “Lord, I believe.” ([John9:38](#))

What a contrast of light and darkness, belief and disbelief! The cured man accepts Jesus very readily, and the religious leaders who should know who He is, rejected Him. As St. Paul said in his letter to the Romans, “What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of the faith of Jesus; but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.” ([Romans 9:30-31](#))

Lord, open our spiritual eyes to see what You want to heal in us today. Let us not be stubborn. Your power is what will grant us eternal salvation so let us be obedient to your will as the blind man was obedient to your command.

Sources:

- Bible, English Standard Version
- Catena Bible and Commentary
- Commentaries on the Gospel of St. John by Fr. Tadros Malaty