

## Sixth Sunday of Lent - The Man Born Blind

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“In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God, Amen.

On the sixth Sunday of Lent, the church reads the passage about the man born blind. Christ’s goodness and grace are indescribable. He granted sight to one who was blind. He also granted us this grace; the Son of God came and gave us sight. If we thanked Him for this grace for the rest of eternity, it would not be enough.

If Christ did not give us this grace, we would be blind. So, it’s fitting that we thank God a lot. Don’t think that one day you’ll have thanked God enough for the grace of inner sight—this new creation He gave us.

“There is no gift that won’t increase except the one you’re not grateful for.”<sup>1</sup>

So, let’s learn to thank God every day for giving us the gift of sight.

With sight we live as children of life. If there is no sight, we will be like secular people. Sight—inner sight; the new man within us; the second birth; baptism—is how we will see Christ’s face in Heaven. That’s why Christ said, “...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”<sup>2</sup> We cannot see God without baptism.

So, the eye we acquire in baptism—this sight—is what we will use to see Christ’s face. This eye is what the holy fathers in every generation lived by, and saw Christ wherever they went.

When do I look at a person the wrong way? When I use the old eye; the bad, carnal, fallen one.

I look and say, ‘He is bad...he is not good...he is a dishonest person.’ I describe people this way because that is how I see them. Some say, ‘I find this person very annoying; I won’t look at him.’ There are even worse things—hating and gossiping about people. Where does this come from? The bad eye.

Did Christ not die for this person you can’t love? Remember this: Christ died for the salvation of the world and sacrificed Himself for everyone. So, Christ loves this person I don’t love. How much did He love them? To the point of sacrifice. Christ died for them because He loved them.

If Christ loved them and died for them, then I have no right not to love them.

So, how can we fix this? It’ll be fixed when we close the outer, carnal eye and open the inner eye and see with it.

See what? The face of Christ in everyone. It’s a new eye. It’ll see everything truthful, everything revered, everything pure. How can someone see uncleanness? With the old eye—the eye of the body. We see inappropriate scenes and evil things with the outer eye.

What about the inner eye? It doesn’t see uncleanness. The sight Christ gave us—the new birth—sees all that is pure.

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<sup>1</sup> St Isaac the Syrian

<sup>2</sup> John 3:5

“If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.”<sup>3</sup>

If we lived by this grace Christ gave us, we’d be in heaven.

“Blessed are the pure in heart...”<sup>4</sup>

We’d see very innocently and love everyone with extreme loyalty.

We could ask, ‘Won’t that person have enemies? Can someone live in this world without enemies?’ Believe me, they will even love their enemies.

Christ didn’t just leave us with the commandment, “Love your enemies.” He gave us a way.

But how, God?

‘See them through My eyes...those who persecute you and say all kind of evil against you for My name’s sake.’

‘But how can I look at them? They deserve hellfire.’

He said, ‘No, I did not come to judge people; I came here to save. Look at your persecutors with My eye; you will love them. Look at them with the eye of a normal person, and you’ll hate and curse them.’

Look with the eye that Christ gave you. Just like He opened the blind man’s eyes, and he began to see everything he could not see before.

The opening of the eyes is a very big deal!

Imagine entering church with an open eye—wow!

If the eye is closed, you won’t see anything. However, if I enter the church and the sanctuary, and look at the altar with the inner eye, it’d be full of thousands and thousands, and myriads and myriads of angels. This small altar? Thousands of angels? Who could see this sight and live a normal life like everyone else?

When the eye is opened and sees that Christ gave Himself up, died for you, and broke His body for you—when you see it with that inner eye, you will leave the church with a fire inside of you. You’ll be burning with love, sacrifice, and generosity towards everyone. Why? Because you have an open eye: an open eye that Christ created for you.

We only look at what is visible. “...while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”<sup>5</sup>

Imagine. Your whole life will change because of this sight, because of this grace.

How do I live? Live to look at the true essence of things.

For example, people look at actors, and the people of the world who dance provocatively and expose their bodies. What do they see? A decomposing body. After the soul has left the most beautiful body in the world, it becomes a carcass—that is what is seen. Look internally.

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew 6:22-23

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 5:8

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor 4:18

Take today's Matins Gospel, for example: the Pharisees looked like saints, dressing and acting in a certain way, loving the praise of men. Then Christ looked inside, and said they looked like a whitewashed tomb. Beautiful from the outside, but full of rot and uncleanness on the inside.

Christ gave you this eye to see what is not seen, what is internal.

Don't be fooled by outward appearances. The outer eye only sees what is on the outside. The sight Christ gave you looks at people at their core. Don't be tempted by their outward appearance; don't be tempted by the apparent world economy; it's all transient. It's ever-changing, like the different appearances of autumn, summer, spring, and winter. These are all outward appearances. But inside? Who can see the internal? Who can look on the inside except Christ who knows the depths of man? He gave you this sight.

He said, 'Come; I will open your eyes.'

Say, 'Thank you, Lord; I truly thank you. Many people have been tempted by the world. Thank you for opening my eyes.'

He opened the eyes of St. Anthony, and he said, "What are these temporal riches? What is this people are chasing?"

He truly opened the eyes of the saints, so they looked and saw the world was full of vanity, vanity of vanities, and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun.<sup>6</sup> So they said, 'Should I be a slave to this when He gave me sight?!'

So, I implore you, thank Christ very very much every day for this sight.

Thank you, God. Really, thank you. You have allowed me to see my brethren with righteous sight, and love everyone from the bottom of my heart. How was I living before?! I used to get upset, hold grudges, envy one, and gossip about another—what kind of poor life is this?

When You gave me sight, I looked at everyone's faces and loved them so much for the sake of Christ Who is in them.

We know the Son of God came and gave us vision.

Of course there is conflict. With whom? With those who think their eyes are open.

They took hold of this man born blind, 'Come here. What did He do?'

He said to them, 'He opened my eyes.'

They said, 'Let's discuss this.'

He said to them, 'Brethren, it doesn't need discussion. I was blind and now I see...it doesn't need discussion.'

They said, 'But He did this on a Saturday; this Man is a sinner.'

He said to them, 'Sinner or not, it doesn't concern me. What concerns me is that I was blind and now I see.'

They said to him, 'We don't know where this Man is from.'

He said to them, 'How can you not know where He is from if he opened my eyes?'

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<sup>6</sup> Ecclesiastes 2: 11

They said to him, 'We know Moses, and that God spoke to him. But we do not know where this Man is from.'

He said to them, 'Well, I know Him. I know Him because of this unique experience.'

What is true knowledge of God? Philosophers of their time say they know God because they philosophise and think a lot.

The scribes and Pharisees were debating this event, whereas a great miracle was performed for the blind man whose heart's eyes were opened.

What is the knowledge of God? Information? No.

Does someone know God because he has read books and heard sermons? No.

He who knows God is the one whose eyes God opened, so he saw Him. When Jesus had him (the blind man) brought to Him again, He asked him, "'Do you believe in the Son of God?' He answered and said, 'Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?' And Jesus said to him, 'You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.'"<sup>7</sup>

"You have seen him." 'So why did I (Christ) open your eyes? I opened your eyes so you can know Me.'

Why be baptised? So you can truly know God. This is the true God and eternal life.

Is God known by knowledge? No; He is known by baptism, with sight.

And when a person knows God and fears Him, they begin to exhibit the traits of the children of God.

Knowledge does not prevent us from sinning. We can have knowledge and still sin. But when we meet Christ, love Him, and live by Him, we cannot sin.

"Whoever has been born of God does not sin..."<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, if I live according to my birth, I do not sin.

This is also a very nice verse: 'Whoever is born of God knows God.'<sup>9</sup> So knowing God is not a matter of the mind; it's not studied. So, what is it? True knowledge of God is being born of Him.

God's "seed remains in him."<sup>8</sup>

So that's why I tell you, make this day a day of thanksgiving.

Say, 'I thank you very much because You graced me with this sight. Please bless it. Don't let me walk according to the people of the world, as a blind man, unable to see.'

"...he who hates his brother is in darkness..."<sup>10</sup>

If hatred attaches itself to the heart, it blinds it. He who hates his brother is blind; short sighted. Whoever loves his brother will have a heart that is illuminated.

Please apply this to practical life.

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<sup>7</sup> John 9:35-37

<sup>8</sup> 1 John 3:9

<sup>9</sup> 1 John 4:7

<sup>10</sup> 1 John 2:11

Whoever holds fast to God lives in sight—in everything, in small and big matters—lives by this sight and thanks God for it. Thank you, God, for illuminating my heart, illuminating my eye, illuminating my mind. “In Your light we see light.”<sup>11</sup> Without it, there is no light.

May God give us this grace, sustain it, and grant us to truly live the life that Christ gave for us.

Glory be to God forever. Amen.”

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<sup>11</sup> Psalm 36:9