

Fourth Sunday of Lent

An engineer dies and reports it to Pearly Gates. Saint Peter checks his dossier and does not see his name there, accidentally sends him to Hell. It doesn't take long before the engineer becomes rather dissatisfied with the level of comfort in Hell.

He soon begins to design and build improvements. Shortly thereafter, Hell has air conditioning, flush toilets and escalators. Needless to say, the engineer is a pretty popular guy.

One day, God calls Satan and says: "So, how are things in Hell?"

Satan replies: "Hey, things are going great. We've got air conditioning, flush toilets, and escalators. And there's no telling what this engineer is going to come up with next."

"What!" God exclaims: "You've got an engineer? That's a mistake - he should never have been sent to Hell. Send him to me."

"Not a chance," Satan replies: "I like having an engineer on the staff, and I'm keeping him!"

God insists: "Send him back or I'll sue."

Satan laughs uproariously and answers: "Yeah, right. And where are you going to get a lawyer?"

Dear Friends,

Today, as we celebrate the Fourth Sunday of Lent, also known as *Laetare Sunday*, we pause in our Lenten journey for a moment of joy and hope. The word *Laetare* means "rejoice," reminding us that even in the midst of our Lenten sacrifices, we anticipate the joy of Easter.

This Sunday, in continuation to last week's readings, reflects on God's call that is never ending and it is a process and progress. As humans we are called to do something on this earth whether it may be a big accomplishment or small things, but God has called you for a purpose.

The first reading explains how God calls people or how God thinks differently than humans. Samuel and David's family failed to realize the insight of God at the beginning and then they were able to understand God's plan.

The Gospel today presents us with the story of the man born blind, a powerful encounter between Jesus and a man who lived in darkness—physically and spiritually—until Jesus, the Light of the World, opened his eyes. This passage invites us to reflect on our own spiritual blindness and the healing light that Christ offers us.

The disciples ask Jesus a question that reflects a common belief of the time: "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2). Jesus, however, corrects their thinking. Suffering is not always a result of sin; rather, God can work through it to reveal His glory. This is a lesson for us: instead of judging others in their struggles, we should look how God is working in their lives.

In a deeper sense, blindness in this Gospel is not just physical but spiritual. The Pharisees, though they have sight, are blind to the truth of Jesus. They refuse to believe in Him, choosing darkness over light. How often do we, too, prefer the comfort of our own ways, refusing to see the truth that Christ reveals?

The man who was blind gradually comes to faith. At first, he calls Jesus "a man" (John 9:11), then "a prophet" (John 9:17), and finally, he worships Him as "Lord" (John 9:38). His physical healing leads to spiritual enlightenment.

On the other hand, the Pharisees remain blind. They refuse to accept the truth, clinging to their own understanding of the law rather than being open to God's work. Their blindness is self-imposed, caused by pride and stubbornness.

This contrast challenges us: Are we open to seeing God's presence in our lives? Or do we resist His grace, preferring our own ways? If you were to place yourself in this story, who in your heart would you reflect?

St. Paul reminds us in the second reading: "You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8). This Lent, let us allow Christ to open our eyes to see as He sees—to recognize His presence in our lives, to love as He loves, and to follow Him with faith.

The story is placed in the midst of those in the OCIA program as they open their eyes in their faith journey each week to experience more wonders in the church. We too can journey with them in experience to see God in new ways each day in our lives. If we are like the Pharisees, we will not believe and see God's goodness in life. My prayer is that you all want to see Christ in a clearer and deeper way each day in our lives.