

Dear Parishioners,

This past Sunday, March 22, we celebrated *Laetare* Sunday, in which it is only twice in a year that a priest is given the option to wear the Rose/Pink colored vestment. The Gospel reading this year taken from cycle A was from St. John with the account of the man born blind. What stands out to me is simply this, the man born blind who is sitting on the side of the road, never asks Jesus to heal him.

Rather, Jesus initiates it by making a mud cream out of the dirt with his own saliva and rubs it onto his eyes. I can only imagine that the blind man thought someone was trying to humiliate him or playing a cruel joke. And to add insult to injury, he is told to go to the Pool of Siloam to clean himself up. He is blind and he has mud in his eyes, how does he know where to go.

Yet, the miracle is this. It is not so much in what will happen next which is after cleaning his eyes, he is healed but rather there was something in Jesus' voice that convinced the blind man that Jesus was not there to harm him or make fun of him. The blind man must have sensed something divine that he trusted and he had faith. Therein lies the real miracle.

How often are we, who can see, willing to trust in what Jesus has asked us to do. We may feel that in our present situation or circumstances that we have mud in our faces that we did not place ourselves. It was actually thrown in our face by another. And then we are asked to deal with it, to clean it off, and to fix it.

There is a great temptation to become angry, frustrated and resentful. But perhaps the Gospel is challenging us to do something life changing and life altering. We accept it and we trust. We place our faith in the soothing, calming, and sincere words of Jesus and we follow and we are obedient to his word.

And much like the blind man, we will see more clearly. In this time of communal health crisis and what has been asked of us to be charitable to our neighbor and maintain social distancing that has interrupted our daily lives and freedoms, it really does feel that mud has been thrown across our faces that we did not bring upon ourselves.

Instead of getting angry, frustrated, and resentful, we have an opportunity to trust in what our Church leadership has asked all to do, continue to be charitable for the health of others, to participate in a spiritual communion, and to engage in social connections of family especially family prayer in reciting the rosary. Additionally, I invite all of us to pray this prayer that Archbishop Sample has provided during this time.

Heavenly Father,

You hear the cry of the poor.

The voices of the faithful in this Archdiocese of Portland

join the chorus from around the world,

imploping your divine assistance in this difficult season.

We entrust our families, schools and parishes to Your loving mercy.

Heal the sick;

console the anxious;

Be our guide in every decision – big and small,
so that we may give glory to Your name at all times.

Grant us a spirit of tenderness and patience,
that we may become witnesses of Your great love
in this valley of tears.

Increase in us a hunger for your Son's Real Presence
as we strive to be truly present to one another.

Raise up men and women of courage in this Archdiocese
who will serve as instruments of Your mercy.

Let us not be overwhelmed by fear or sorrow,
but rather overcome by hope in Your divine majesty.

You are Lord over all!

Your ways are mysterious
and marvelous.

Your plans are beyond our understanding,
but You hold us in the palm of Your hand.

Awaken in us a deep trust in Your divine providence,
so that we may move forward in confidence and serenity.

We turn to Mary, our loving Mother,
whose own heart has been pierced by our lament.

May we find comfort and protection in her Immaculate Heart,
and may she lead us to Jesus, in whose friendship we find our everlasting home.

Amen.

Have a Blessed Week!

~Fr. Michael

29 March 2020