

**All Saints Episcopal Church
Steenrijk**

Willemstad, Curacao

The Fourth Sunday in Lent (A)

March 19, 2023

DRAFT

“Do we have flexibility?”

DRAFT

The Holy Gospel according to

John 9:1-41

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his

parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man’s eyes with the clay, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Silo’am” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. The

neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, “Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?” Some said, “It is he”; others said, “No, but he is like him.” He said, “I am the man.”

They said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Silo’ am and wash’; so I went and washed and received my sight.” They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it

was a sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.”

Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?”

There was a division among them. So they again said to the blind man, “What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.” The Jews did not believe that

he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight, and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if any one should confess him to be Christ, he was

to be put out of the synagogue.

Therefore his parents said, “He is of age, ask him.” So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner.” He answered, “Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see.” They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become his

disciples?” And they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.”

The man answered, “Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if any one is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were

not from God, he could do nothing.”

They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you.” He said, “Lord, I believe”; and he worshiped him. Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may

become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard this, and they said to him, “Are we also blind?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

[The other readings for 4 Lent (A) are 1 Samuel 16:1-13, Psalm 23, and Ephesians 5:8-14 which are in the URL below:]

http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Lent/ALent4_RCL.html

Precious Lord, help us to see ourselves and others as you see us.

Amen.

We tend to be fearful of those things from which the Lord protects us, but oftentimes we look more at the dark than at the light. I recall my early ministry in a war-torn area of the South Bronx in the mid-1980's, where the fires were still smoldering. It was a very scary place then forty years ago, but very much improved now, I am glad to say. When

the Vicar of the church I was assisting there told me never to walk on the sidewalk but only in the middle of the street, my wariness only increased. But being in the neighborhood as a familiar face for a while gained me entrance into the depths of the darkest place, a foreboding park one would never venture into; but guided and protected by two young men who wanted to show me how their society had been caring for their last, least, and lonely during all those years of trouble I saw how the most mentally disturbed were carefully cared

for in the middle of that foreboding park—they were well fed, clothed, and watched over. It was a sight to behold, a sight my eyes would have feared looking into or even believing could exist a few months before. There are some very good people doing remarkably holy work even when you think there are none; the Lord really does provide.

One sunny spring day in Central Park in New York City a blind man was seen tapping for attention with his cane and carrying a sign on his chest which read, "Help the Blind." No one paid much attention to him. A little farther on down the walkway another blind beggar was doing better. Practically every passer-by put coins into his cup, some who had gone by without making a donation even turned back to make their contribution. His sign said, "It is Spring--and I am blind."

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The innovative genius Buckminster Fuller attributed his talents to his experience of blindness as a small child. He was nearly blind for several years but regained his sight a few years later just as quickly as he had lost it. What he found was that society's ability to tell him what he was seeing had been broken, and Buckminster Fuller could conceive the design of things in ways no one else had been able to. His concept of the geodesic dome was an amazing

insight, making equal sided geometrical figures on the side of a sphere to create an extremely strong new form of building. His insights have even more recently inspired molecular chemists to see how the basic building blocks of atoms could fit together in a geodesic dome sort of pattern. Indeed carbon atoms that are arranged in a geodesic spherical design produce amazing new types of super lubricants. And following on to those so-called “Bucky balls” named for Buckminster Fuller we now have what are called “micro-tubules”,

atomic sized worm-like structures that are being explored for uses in the creation of channels for electrons to produce supercomputers faster than anything ever before possible. They all started from a concept created by someone who had once been nearly blind.

Of course, the most famous ‘bucky ball’ is the centerpiece of Disney World’s Epcot Center in Orlando, Florida. The sixteen story 165 foot high geodesic structure towers above that theme park and houses the Spaceship

Earth ride exploring various scientific advances over the centuries and some future ones to look forward to. It is a very strong structure that has withstood six hurricanes with windspeeds over 100 miles per hour, 180 kilometers per hour.

Maybe our own life has been blind to some shortcoming, some sin that clings to us like water, some failure that had made us unable to see the truth. That is where faith in the Creator and the Creator's only Son comes into play. Only by thinking "outside the box" of

worldly wisdom can we achieve
dominance over our addictions and sins,
secret or otherwise.

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Lutheran Pastor Steve Molin writes:
“Several years ago I was preparing to
preach a sermon on the rigidity of the
Pharisees, and I had folded into each
worship bulletin, adhesive labels which
said either “I’M ALWAYS RIGHT!” or
“I MIGHT BE WRONG.” I asked
people to stick their labels on their lapels
and wear them during the sharing of the
peace; and as we shared the peace, the

sanctuary was a-buzz with wonderful conversation and laughter. But on the way home that day, I forgot that I was still wearing my label which read “I’M ALWAYS RIGHT!” At the gas station I received a rather chilly response from the attendant. When I stopped at Roth’s grocery store, the clerk seemed almost afraid of me, and our conversation was brief and sterile. And it wasn’t until I got home, when my wife Marsha blurted out “You’re not always right! In fact, you’re rarely right!” And then I remembered the gas station and the

grocery store, and I realized the power of being absolutely right. It stifles conversation, it eliminates tolerance, and it erects walls of separation. So these days, I wear a different label: I might be wrong. I might not understand it all. Someone else might have something to offer.

So when we want to judge someone else, let us be aware of our own spiritual blindness. Jesus can use us only if we allow him to open our own eyes to see the love he has for others. Amen.

“Do we have flexibility?”

Description: Blindness can be a weakness, but for some it becomes a life giving gift. Overcoming our own blindness to important things around us will potentially be life giving for us as well.

Tags: Blind, blindness, mud, healing, heal, wash, spittle, Siloam, spiritually,

spiritual, physical, judge, Jesus, God,
Son, redeem, separation, last, least, lost,
lonely, caring, miracle, miraculous,
Molin, right, addictions, sins, secret,
Pharisees, sanctuary, Gospel, John,
Buckminster Fuller, geodesic, dome,
Bucky balls, superlubricant, micro-
tubules, supercomputers, spring

Is EPCOT ball a dodecahedron?

The shape of the Geosphere is actually a pentakis dodecahedron (see <http://mathworld.wolfram.com/PentakisDodecahedron.html>).

[The Geosphere at the the Epcot Center park - Math Central](#)