

**HOMILY**  
**The Vigil of the Fourth Sunday in Lent**  
**Saturday, March 25, 2006**  
**4:30 PM Liturgy - Cycle A**

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**St. John the Evangelist Parish**  
**Davison, Michigan**

John Killinger tells the story of a man who one day visited a classroom for visually impaired children. Troubled by what he saw, the man remarked, "It must be terrible to go through life without eyes." One little girl quickly responded, "It's not half as bad as having two good eyes but still not be able to see."

Her point was well made. There is physical blindness and there is another, even more tragic form of blindness that affects the spirit. We find both forms of blindness in today's Gospel reading from the ninth chapter of John's Gospel.

*"As he walked along, Jesus saw a man born blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'"*  
*Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him."*

Notice that when the disciples see the blind man, they see something to discuss. When Jesus sees him, he sees something to do. The disciples want to debate the truth; Jesus chooses to do it...and be it.

So, as the story goes, Jesus spits on the ground and makes clay of the spittle, and then he anoints the man's eyes with the clay. Now, the single, most important word in this whole passage is this word: "Anoints." The word, the original Greek used here for "anoints" is the same used for the word "Christ," which means "The Anointed One." He anoints the man's eyes. He *Christ*s the man's eyes. Isn't that beautiful? He *Christ*s the man's eyes! Now, let me ask you something. Would you like to have your eyes *Christ-ed*? Recall the rest of the story. After anointing the man's eyes with clay, Jesus sends him to wash in the pool of Siloam. The man goes, washes away the clay, and comes back seeing.

What a great story! It's so packed with the stuff of life. There is so much here—blindness and sight, sickness and healing, prejudice and love, fear and faith, rejection and acceptance, defeat and victory. But the question is: Have your eyes been *Christ-ed*? Can you see with the vision of our Lord? Have your eyes been anointed with the spirit of Christ? With your permission, I would like to break this down into three thoughts.

First, when your eyes have been *Christ-ed*, it changes with way you see yourself. You and I were born blind! We were born blinded by the cataracts of selfishness! We came into the world screaming: “Do something for me! Feed me, love me, hold me, burp me, change me, rock me!” Throughout infancy and childhood, and into the teen years, and, sometimes, even into adulthood for some, it’s ME, ME, ME. Take care of ME! Cater to ME! Please ME! Give to ME! Pamper ME!

Time and time again, Jesus makes it very clear that one of the things that blinds us most is selfishness, and the only cure is to have our eyes *Christ-ed*. The miracle each of us needs is to move from saying, “That belongs to me.” to “I belong to that.” To move from selfish vision to service vision; to move from, “Do something for me!” to “Let me do and be for God and others.” When your eyes have been *Christ-ed*, it changes the way you see other people.

I heard about a mother who took her children to a crowded restaurant one day. Her six-year-old son asked if he could say the grace. He prayed:

God is great.  
God is good.  
Let us thank him for the food.  
And God, I would thank you even more  
if mom gets us ice cream for dessert.  
And liberty and justice for all.

Amen

Along with the laughter from the other customers nearby, a woman at the very next table growled loudly: “That’s what’s wrong with this country. Kids today don’t even know how to pray. The very idea...asking God for ice cream. Why I never!” Hearing this, the little six-year-old boy burst into tears and he asked his mother, “Did I do it wrong? I’m sorry. Is God mad at me?”

The little boy’s mother pulled him over onto her lap; she hugged him tightly and assured him that he had done a terrific job with his prayer and God was certainly not mad at him. Just then, an elderly gentleman walked over to the table. He winked at the little boy and he said, “I know God really well. We visit every day and I happen to know that God loved your prayer. It may have been the best one he has heard all day.” “Really, the little boy asked?” “Cross my heart.” Then he leaned over and whispered into the little boy’s ear. Pointing at the woman at the next table, he said, “Too bad she never asks God for ice cream. A little ice cream is good for the soul sometimes.”

Naturally, the mother ordered ice cream for her kids at the end of the meal. The little six-year-old stared at his for a moment and then he did something that no one in the restaurant that day will ever forget. He picked up his sundae and, without a word, walked over and placed it in front of the woman at the next table. With a big smile, “Here, this is for you. Ice cream is good for the soul sometimes and my soul is good already.”

Somewhere in heaven Jesus was smiling because that little boy had already learned how to look at others with the eyes of sacrificial love. Sight, true sight, is always a matter of the heart, not of the eyes. When our eyes have been *Christ-ed*, we see with our hearts. And we realize what Jesus taught long ago...that we are all in this together...that we are all persons for whom Christ came and died.

When our eyes are anointed with the spirit of Christ—then we see people differently. We see them as part of God’s family, we accept them, we embrace them and help them and treat them with respect and love.

Thirdly, and finally, it changes the way we see God. Notice the way the healed man refers to Jesus. Notice the growth. First, he refers to Jesus as a man. He says, “The man Jesus did this for me.” Next, he calls Jesus a prophet. He says, “To be able to do this, he must be a prophet.” Then, in that intimate moment at the end, he sees him as the Son of God. He claims him as the Lord of his life.

Open your eyes. Look at this now. The closer he gets to Jesus, the more time he spends with Jesus, the clearer he sees God. And that’s the way it works for you and me, too. Because, you see, that’s what it means to have *Christ-ed eyes*.