

8. February 2025

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN
“The blind see, those who see are blinded”

Jn 9:24-41

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.

What a relief to hear a sensible Jewish voice in the midst of those hardened Pharisees! Today we meet again the man who was healed of his blindness. Despite the hostile environment around him, he had the courage to confess what he had understood. Obviously he was not afraid of the Pharisees at all, and he held on to his conviction that a prophet had worked a miracle on his behalf, as he had testified about Jesus in the first interrogation: *"He is a prophet"*.

His statements were even clearer when the Pharisees questioned him a second time, trying to persuade him that Jesus must be a sinner. But he replied: *"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."*

He understood that something extraordinary had happened to him and that such a miracle could only be performed by someone sent by God: *"If this man were not from God, he could do nothing"*.

We see that the Pharisees cannot refute him. The sign that Jesus did in front of everyone and the testimony of the healed man were so true and consistent that they could only question who Jesus really was and rethink their attitude towards Him. That would have been the proper response. But they were unwilling to do so and reacted as people tend to do when they close themselves off from the truth. In addition, they insult those who speak the truth and bear witness to it. In the worst cases, they even persecuted and killed them, as would later happen to Jesus and many of His witnesses.

This reaction - so typical, unfortunately - of rejecting the truth and insulting the one who speaks it has also occurred in the context of today's Gospel. The Pharisees reacted to the fearless words of the man who had been healed by saying: *"You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out."*

They saw no other way!

Then the man met Jesus again. The Lord revealed Himself to him and he believed. This is what happened: while some threw him out because he testified to the truth, the One who is the truth Himself took him in, and then he received the light in fullness. The eyes of the blind man were opened. God gave him not only his physical sight, but also the light to recognise and believe in the Son of God.

In today's passage, Jesus does not leave us without an important lesson. Some of the Pharisees had overheard the Lord's words while He was talking to the man:

"For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind." Then they asked Him: *"Are we also blind?"*

The Lord's answer gives us a lesson that stands: *"If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains."*

The blindness of the Pharisees is obvious. Being learned in religion, they even believe they have the right to reject Jesus and condemn Him to death. That is why they consider themselves 'seers'. But their closed-mindedness towards Jesus testifies to their own blindness. It is pride that blinds them. And the Lord exposes it. What a tragedy!