

DAILY READINGS REFLECTION FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT 22 March 2020

**THIS DAY IS HOLY TO THE LORD OUR GOD; DO NOT MOURN OR WEEP. FOR THIS DAY IS HOLY TO OUR LORD; AND DO NOT BE GRIEVED, FOR THE JOY OF THE LORD IS OUR STRENGTH (Cf. Nehemiah 8:9-10)**

First Reading 1 Sam 16:1, 6-7, 10-13. Men judge by appearances, God sees into a person's heart

Second Reading Eph 5:8-14 You were darkness once, now you are light in the Lord

Gospel Reading Jn 9: 1-41 Now I can see! In today's Gospel it is the man born blind who gradually comes to see that Jesus is Lord. Meanwhile the Pharisees, the custodians of the traditional faith, fall steadily into blindness. (St Pauls Sunday Missal p. 208)

REFLECTION Christ's identity and our identity in Christ 490 words

"I came into the world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind (Jn 9, 39).

JESUS' ACTIONS AND WORDS Quoting Isaiah (6, 9), Jesus presents himself as a prophet whose word, coming from God, can recreate the world from its brokenness.

This is what is implied by the word "judgment", whose Greek root refers to the verb "to separate" (Genesis 1). Just as in the beginning God separated light from darkness, so the enigmatic word of Jesus sorts out the depths of the heart. (The Greek root is found in English 'crisis'.)

THE PHARISEES' HEARTS That is, if the heart understands that it is mixed up! If it doesn't, the light that is Christ can only show that the heart is blind. And the heart that said it could see, suddenly sees nothing.

Blessed is the breach into which heaven can flow, forgiving and recreating!  
Meditate what wonderful irony in this story of the man born blind!

THE DISCIPLES' BLINDNESS The disciples and the Pharisees are not blind. But

the way they look upon the man who was born blind, focusing only on his sin, shows their own blindness.

They think the man somehow deserves this misfortune for something bad he or his parents must have done. And so they condemn him to a double punishment.

This is the evil that is blinding! It obscures the picture as if this evil dominated everything.

**THE LIGHT OF GOODNESS** The light of kindness, on the contrary, does not saturate the landscape. It is like the light that makes one see things without being seen. It permits the existence of evil because it has, in its very innocence, more tricks up its sleeve than evil does.

But goodness does not dazzle us. It is somehow invisible and must be seen with a look that is itself good and clear.

**JESUS ENCOUNTERS THE BLIND MAN** So how does Jesus look at the man born blind? He sees only that his heart is open to God and, thus, that his eyes are already open.

When the disciples ask him if the man was born blind because he sinned or because his parents sinned, Jesus says that that is not the question. The only question is that God, who is good, will draw good from every evil.

When faced with evil, Jesus looks only to his Father, the eternal source of creation. And in this way he "re-edits", with his saliva and mud, the creative gesture.

What does this mean for us? How can we look at the evil of the world, the evil of hearts, this evil that does so much harm?

Do we today assess the crisis of suffering in the light or are we blind to the word that God is speaking to us in this critical time?

Perhaps it is necessary to accept seeing any evil, moral or physical, without looking at it too much, refusing to believe that its destructive force will have

the last word. We need to plunge our gaze into the gaze of Christ and let ourselves be inspired.

This is a slightly edited version of Marina Poydenot's reflection in La Croix International 22/03/2020. Marina is a consecrated member of the Chemin-Neuf ('New Way') Community in Chartres (France).