

St. Louis Catholic Church

Fourth Sunday of Lent

John 9:1-41

Let's keep the light burning. The light, of course is Jesus Christ. He proclaimed that He is "the light of the world". During the baptismal ritual the celebrant takes the baptismal candle and lights it from the Paschal Easter Candle. That Paschal Candle is lit every Holy Saturday from the Blessed Easter Fire. Gathered in darkness the Church proclaims by this new light that Christ is the light in the darkness of our lives. We follow from the outside darkness the Easter Candle into the church with our small candles singing "Christ Our Light--Thanks Be To God".

The Easter ceremony reminds us that God created the world out of nothing and darkness and said "Let there be light". Despite man's creation in His image and likeness, man chose the darkness of sin. Man and the world were lost in the darkness of suffering, sickness, sin and death. Yet, God could and would not abandon His people or creation. A light shone over Bethlehem and the people who lived in darkness would now see the light. God became a man to enlighten mankind which was blind to the glow of God. Christ came to overcome the darkness and defeat the shadow that mankind lived in for centuries since the fall of Adam.

Soon we will celebrate that the light was snuffed out briefly by Calvary but like those birthday candles that keep coming back afire after being blown out, Christ the light rose from the dead. No longer would darkness control our lives.

The healing of the man born blind was a prefiguring of all sacraments but especially baptism. Seems crude for Jesus to spit in the dirt and wipe the eyes of this man who was blind. He then says go and wash in the pool of Siloam. Every sacrament has matter and form. For example the matter in baptism is water. In the Eucharist it is the bread and wine. In Confirmation it is the oil. The form is the words, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit". In the Eucharist it is the words of institution, "This is My body, etc., This is My blood, etc." I just anointed someone today who will have surgery and used the Blessed Oil of the Sick and prayed through this Holy Anointing may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. And may the Lord free you from sin, save you and raise you up.

We are baptized and therefore enlightened by Christ. We are to walk as children of the light. The man who was given sight became a child of the light. He testified that the man Jesus had given him sight and that He was a prophet. He believed. Imagine down the months and years ahead how many came to believe because of the testimony and witness of this man. He received the light and he kept the light burning.

The Gospel says that Jesus cured this man who was blind in order that the works of God could be visible. You and I are enlightened and given spiritual sight so that we too can be a light in today's darkness. When we act in the name of Christ we brighten the world.

Our 24 Hours for the Lord--ministries in the parish--good deeds of generosity and service all brighten someone's life. People are in darkness today because they are ignorant of the truth, they live in poverty, they are homeless, they are sick and diseased, they are ostracized by society and

many other forms of darkness. You and I are baptized to be and show Christ's light that they may have hope. Let our light shine. Be active! Be involved!

The Bishop's Appeal is upon us beginning today with Commitment Sunday. 40 years ago God called Memphis and West Tennessee to be "Christ among us". The local church or Diocese is all of the baptized enlightened Catholics under the shepherd of a bishop in the succession of the apostles appointed by the Holy Father--the Vicar of Christ and Successor of Peter. This Diocese has educated and ordained over 80 men to the priesthood. It is costly. Yet they all have served sacramentally to make the light shine. Programs to enlighten us spiritually like Cursillo and the Retreat Center at Our Lady Queen of Peace. Valuable yet costly. Yet they shine the light. A retirement home for our priests says thank you and assists them to still be a light. Education in Religious Education shines the light on our people from pre-school till senior aged people learning more of their faith. Our Catholic and Jubilee Schools shine a light to shape children in the values of Christ. People in darkness--homeless, diseased, abused, refugees all are ministered to by the Light of the Church through the Bishop's Appeal.

As you have or will see in the video Bishop Steib reminds us that like the blind man we are given the light and now--let's keep the light burning. The Diocese is Christ among us--you and I are members of the Church--His Body in the world and in Memphis and West Tennessee. I pray that all of us add to the glow and participate.

God Bless,
Msgr. John McArthur

Commitment Sunday is April 2nd and 3rd
Parish Goal--\$439,000
Our Personal Goal--100% Participation