

SIXTH PASCHAL SUNDAY – SUNDAY OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

In today's Gospel reading, we heard the story of the healing of a blind man. Jesus saw this weak man, had mercy on him, and healed him. It gives us new strength and hope, that the Lord sees all of our sorrows and sufferings, and that He will soon come to our aid and heal us.

When Christ and his disciples saw this poor man, the disciples did not think it was possible to help him. Instead, they asked Christ a very strange question, "Teacher, who has sinned? Is it he or his parents that he was born blind?" (John 9: 2)

Christ's response shocked the apostles. "Neither he nor his parents sinned; but that the works of God might be made visible through him." (John 9: 3). How wonderful these words are for each of us. This tells us that we do not need to be afraid of suffering, because the Lord strengthens and sustains us, has mercy on us, and loves us.

In this story about the man born blind, Jesus seeks to show the other side of suffering. He says that we should not consider those who suffer and endure great suffering to be great sinners. All of our sufferings and sorrows is a test to each of us, how sincere we are, and how Christlike we are.

Dear brothers and sisters, this blind man is an image of all mankind, immersed in the darkness of the night, when he did not yet know Christ. The Lord comes to us to help us, but instead, His appearance raises many doubts, questions, and controversies. No man on earth has attracted such close attention to Himself. Jesus points us to our shortcomings and sins. He says that spiritual blindness is our worst sin, because then, although we see, we do not want to believe and we do not want to accept what we see as the truth. Likewise, the Pharisees and scribes, although they saw a miracle, could not believe it and did not want to see in Christ the Promised Messiah, so they tried to accuse Him. "This man is not from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath." (John 9:16). Although, they saw this miracle, they did not want to believe, rejecting the glory and power of the

Lord. This Gospel story urges us to get rid of spiritual blindness and to beware of our sins and passions that harm our souls.

One day King Frederick II of Prussia (1712-1786), passed through a village in his country, saw a poor and ragged boy. When the king learned, from the people, that the boy was an orphan, he took pity on the boy and took him into his yard. Subsequently, the boy received a good education and upbringing. After some time, the king made him his minister and confidant. The king loved him and trusted him. The minister, for his part, was always loyal to his king. But soon, rumors began to circulate that he wanted to conspire against the king. When these rumors reached the king, he called on him and sternly asked his minister, "I was told that when you talk to someone about very important matters, you get worried, interrupt the conversation and go somewhere, and then come back calm and continue the conversation. Tell me, why and where are you going?" "Your Highness," said the minister, "follow me, and I will show you where I am going and what I am doing!" He led the king into an empty room in his apartment. On the wall hung his ragged clothes that he wore as a child. "These are the clothes in which you found me and took me in. When I talk to someone, pride starts to creep into my heart. I interrupt the conversation and come here. These old ragged garments remind me of who I was and who I became out of your grace. That's when I calm down, and then I start my work again." After hearing this, the king fell even more in love with his minister.

As we can see in this example, the minister used the opportunity given to him properly and gained a double good; he achieved happiness, a good life situation, wealth, and especially, a high moral level. The greatest happiness of the man born blind is that he saw not only the beauty of the visible world, but saw Christ, the true treasure of his soul, the source of eternal happiness, goodness, and love.

Therefore, let us keep our spiritual eyes open so that we too can see our sins. Our Lord is great, mighty, and merciful. He continues to work wonders in our world today. We just need to open our spiritual eyes as did the man born blind, "I believe, Lord!" (John 9:38) and worship Christ for His infinite love.

Fr. Serhii Deiak

