

Homily on the Sunday of the Blind Man

Fr. Filip Lommaert

Sunday, May 17, 2026

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. One God! Amen.

Christ is risen!

On this Sixth Sunday of Pascha, as we continue to bask in the unwaning light of the Resurrection and turn our hearts toward the coming feast of Pentecost, the Holy Church presents us with a profound and miraculous Gospel: the healing of the man blind from birth.

This is not merely a story of physical restoration, but a divine icon of our own spiritual enlightenment, a map of the journey from darkness to light, from ignorance to confession, from being an object of pity to becoming a bold witness for Christ.

The Holy Fathers, including the great Saint Basil the Great, teach us that this miracle is of a unique and awesome order. This was not a man whose eyes were merely damaged or non-functioning; as the second Exapostilarion for this Sunday proclaims, “Along the way, our Saviour found a man who lacked both sight and eyes.” He was born without them. Thus, when the Gospel records the astonished words of the healed man’s neighbors and the Pharisees—“ Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind” (John 9:32)—we must understand the full weight of this truth.

There are other healings of blindness in Scripture, but here, the Creator does not repair; He creates anew. From the dust of the earth, the same dust from which Adam was fashioned, our Lord makes clay, places it in the empty sockets, and commands the man to wash in the Pool of Siloam. In that obedient act, the eyes of clay become living eyes! This is a microcosm of our salvation: from the dust of our sin and mortality, through the waters of baptism, we are given new life, new senses, the eyes of faith.

Consider the pattern of Christ's healings here. Usually, there is a petition. A friend, a relative, or the sufferer themselves approaches Jesus with a plea: "Lord, come down before my child dies!"; "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed"; "My little daughter is at the point of death." At other times, the Lord initiates with a question that calls forth desire: "Do you want to be made well?" or "What do you want Me to do for you?"

But in today's Gospel, there is no request, no prior expression of faith. The blind man does not cry out. Our Lord and Saviour does not ask. The disciples see only a theological puzzle—a subject for debate about sin and motive. Yet, the Light of the world, passing by, stops and acts. This is pure, prevenient grace. It is God acting first, out of His boundless love, before we even know to ask, before we even know who He is.

And does this not mirror our own condition? How many of us were born into spiritual blindness, into a world that could not see God? By an ancient plan of the evil one, our inner eyes were meant to stay shut until death.

Millions of us journey through life perceiving only materialism, just struggling along, never knowing the beauty of the soul nor the reality of the spiritual world, and definitely not the face of their Creator. We were born blind from parents who, to one degree or another, were also born blind. But then, in His mercy, the Lord worked a miracle on us.

Without first questioning our faith, knowing full well it was not yet in us, He anointed us. In the mystery of Holy Baptism and Chrismation, He placed upon us the clay of His grace, the holy myrrh, and sent us to wash in the font. And our spiritual eyes were opened. We received the gift we did not even know we desired.

But the Gospel shows us that the gift of sight is only the beginning of the story. The real drama is the journey of faith that follows. Initially, the healed man knows little. His neighbors interrogate him: "How were your eyes opened?" He answers simply, factually: "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." (John 9:11-12).

This sounds so familiar! When we are sick, our process is clinical: we see a doctor, take medicine, recover. People ask, "How did you get better?" and we speak of treatments and physicians. Seldom do we first proclaim, "Christ, the Physician of souls and bodies, has healed me!" Like the blind man, we experience grace long before we fully understand its source.

Then the scene shifts to the Pharisees. The investigation begins, not to celebrate the miracle, but to trap the Miracle-Worker. “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath,” they declare. They ask the healed man, “What do you say about Him, since He has opened your eyes?” And here, faith begins to sprout. He moves from “the man called Jesus” to a firmer confession: “He is a prophet” (John 9:17). The light is dawning within him.

The Pharisees, entrenched in their own spiritual blindness, intensify the pressure. They summon his frightened parents, who acknowledge the healing but evade the question of Jesus’ identity “because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess him to be Christ he was to be put out of the synagogue” (John 9:22).

Here is a temptation we know all too well: the fear of confession. We fear being seen as naïve, overly religious, zealots, “bible-bashers.” We fear marginalization at work, awkwardness with friends, even tension within families. We, like the parents, can become afraid of being “put out of the synagogue” of modern day approval.

But the man who was blind will not be silenced. Reviled by the authorities, abandoned by the caution of his parents, this former beggar now speaks with a boldness that shames the learned: “I have told you already, and you would not listen... We know that God does not listen to sinners... If this man were not from God, He could do nothing” (John 9:27, 31, 33). His logic, born of lived experience, is irrefutable. His faith has grown from fact to theology. For this boldness, he is cast out. He loses his place in the religious community. He endures the cost of confession.

And it is here, when he is cast out, that Christ seeks him out. “Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him He said, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’” (John 9:35). When we are courageous enough to confess Christ, even if it leads to marginalization, He will always come to find us. He meets us in our isolation and asks us the ultimate question, drawing our faith to its fulfillment. The man responds, “Lord, I believe,” and he worships Him (John 9:38).

The journey is complete: from physical blindness to physical sight; from ignorance to knowledge; from knowledge to bold confession; from confession through persecution to the final, glorious encounter with the Lord Himself in worship.

This is the pattern we need to follow. The Gospel presents us with two forms of blindness: the physical blindness of the man, which was healed by Christ, and the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees, which was hardened by their pride and refusal to believe. God can take the one deemed disabled and insignificant by the world and make him a teacher, a missionary, a fearless confessor. Conversely, those with perfect physical sight and great learning can remain in profound darkness if they refuse to accept the Light.

As we approach Pentecost, this Gospel asks each of us: Do you want to see? Not just with your eyes, but with your heart? The Holy Spirit, whom we prepare to receive, is the Spirit of truth who guides us into all truth. He takes the light given to us in Baptism and kindles it into the fire of witness. Let us, therefore, take courage.

First, let us acknowledge the Healer. In every recovery, every moment of peace, every strength granted in weakness, let us cultivate the habit

of seeing Christ's hand. Let us give thanks not only to the medical professionals—whom God uses as instruments of His mercy—but to the Divine Physician Himself, from whom all healing flows.

Second, let us grow in confession. Like the healed man, may we move from shy acknowledgment to bold proclamation. When asked about the hope that is within us, may we be ready to give an answer, with gentleness and respect, but also with clarity: "I was blind, but now I see because I have met Christ."

Third, let us embrace the seeking Lord. If faithfulness leads us into difficulty or loneliness, let us remember that it is precisely there that Christ promises to find us. He will ask us again, "Do you believe?" And our worship in that moment will be deeper and truer than any comfort offered by the world.

The man born blind stands now in the choir of saints, an eternal witness to the power of Christ, the Light of the world. He calls to us from the pages of the Gospel, from the hymns of this Sunday, to join his confession. Let us, therefore, with eyes of faith now open, glorify the One who took our dust and gave us sight, who conquered death and granted us life, who sends His Spirit to enlighten and sanctify us.

To Him, with the Father and the Life-giving Holy Spirit, be all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY, HE IS RISEN!