

Today the Church celebrates the Fourth Sunday of Lent, traditionally called Laetare Sunday. *Laetare* means “rejoice.” In the middle of Lent, the Church gives us a moment of encouragement, a reminder that the joy of Easter is drawing closer.

John tells the story of a man who was blind from birth. When the disciples see him, they immediately ask, “*Who sinned that this man was born blind?*” But Jesus moves the focus away from blame and toward grace. He says that through this moment the works of God will be revealed.

Jesus makes mud, places it on the man’s eyes, and tells him to wash. He does and comes back able to see.

But the deeper miracle unfolds afterward.

As the story continues, the man begins to see who Jesus truly is. At first, he calls Him a man, then a prophet, and finally he worships Him as Lord. Meanwhile, the religious leaders, who can see perfectly well, refuse to believe.

The irony of the Gospel is clear: the blind man sees, and the sighted men remain blind.

St. Paul echoes this in Ephesians: “*You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.*”

Without Christ, our vision becomes distorted. Pride can blind us to our faults. Anger can blind us to another person's dignity. Comfort can blind us to the needs around us. But Jesus comes as the light who restores our sight.

From the earliest centuries, the Church saw this Gospel as an image of Baptism. Just as the blind man washed and received sight, we were washed and given the light of Christ. Lent calls us back to that grace through prayer, repentance, and acts of charity that help us see as God sees.

When Samuel looked for Israel's next king, God told him: *"Not as man sees does God see... the Lord looks into the heart."*

And during Lent, God teaches us to see that way too.

So on this Laetare Sunday we rejoice because Christ is already at work within us. Every step toward repentance, every act of mercy, every moment of conversion is a sign that the light of Christ is opening our eyes.

May the Lord who opened the eyes of the blind man open our eyes as well, so that we may walk always as children of the light.