

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Jesus' disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him."

- John 9:2-3

Why was the man born blind? Jesus' answer, while uncharacteristically direct, is characteristically challenging: this man has lived through a terrible affliction *in order that the works of God may be made manifest*—in order to show what happens when God ends that affliction. And Jesus heals the man, and the man is filled with joy. It all seems to be working out according to Jesus' scenario: the works of God are indeed made manifest as the formerly blind man joyfully tells his story to all who will listen. But then there is a new complication: those who are jealous of Jesus' healing power gang up on the man who had been blind. He pays for his new sense of sight by losing his status in the community. Is this how the works of God are made manifest?

It is easy to get the idea that Jesus passed through the world effortlessly healing people, restoring the lost, stilling storms, and in general "fixing" everything according to our wishes. In fact, it is clear from all the Gospels, but especially from John, that those whom Jesus touched in any way often paid a high price. As the hymn reminds us, they found "the peace of God that filled their hearts / Brimful, and broke them too." Those whom Jesus touched most fully seem to have entered a new world, where neither their former troubles nor their present insecurity count at all against the overwhelming joy and wonder of merely knowing Jesus. We have a glimpse of the world of the Beatitudes, where the meek and persecuted and those who mourn and those who hunger for God are united in rejoicing, because the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. "Do you believe in the Son of man?" —"Lord, I believe!" This, according to the Gospel writers, is the work of God that is truly made manifest; and until we can understand that this is really the only thing at all that matters, we will be like the Pharisees, on the outside looking in, seeming to see but in fact being blind.

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Year A
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in LENT





Jesus and his friends saw a man who had been blind all his life.



Jesus made some mud and put it on the blind man's eyes. Then he told him to go wash it off.



The blind man washed... and he could see!



Later, Jesus asked him, "Do you believe in God's Chosen One?" He said, "Lord, I believe!"

Jesus's friends asked him if the man was born blind because God was punishing him or his parents for something. Jesus said, "No, he is blind so that God can show his saving power." Jesus said that God wants all people to be healed and to know his love. We know God's love from Jesus, the light of the world, who died to give us life.

Wake up! RISE from the DEAD
and CHRIST will give you light
EPHESIANS 5:14

Close your eyes and think about Jesus, the giver of life and light. Then draw your thoughts to decorate the Bible verse.