

Father O'Connor's Homily on 15 March 2026
Fourth Sunday of Lent – A

1 Samuel 16: 1b, 6-7, 10-13a
Ephesians 5: 8-14
John 9: 1-41

There is a story about William Montague Dyke who lived in England. When he was ten years old, he had an accident that blinded him completely. In spite of his disability, he went on to university and did very well. While there, he fell in love with a woman who was the daughter of a high-ranking British naval officer, and they became engaged.

Before their marriage, William wanted to undergo an experimental surgery that might restore his vision. Afterwards he directed that the bandages remain on his eyes until his wedding day when his bride came down the aisle. And that is exactly what happened.

They were in the church, and William was standing in front with his father and his surgeon. The organist began to play and the bride started her procession down the aisle. The surgeon took his scissors out of his lapel pocket and clipped the bandages. The whole congregation was in suspense. William looked at his bride and said, for everyone to hear, "You are more beautiful than I could ever have imagined."

The writer who tells the story adds that, when we come face-to-face with Our Lord at the end of our lives, all that prevents us from seeing clearly will come off, and we will see Jesus in all His glory and majesty and say to Him, "You are more beautiful than I could ever have imagined."

The Gospel today tells about a man who was blind from birth. And it also tells about other people – like us – who are blind by sin, and who do not see as clearly as Jesus can enable us to see.

The Gospel opens with Jesus and His disciples walking through town and encountering a blind man. The disciples were blind to the blind man as they talked among themselves as though he wasn't there. They talked about him but they did not talk with him. They were very insensitive to him and his feelings.

The disciples were also making judgments about him. They asked Jesus, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" And Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents sinned."

There are circumstances in life, there are laws of nature, there are accidents that happen. It is not always that someone sinned and is now being punished. And

Jesus demonstrates, by using His divine power, that a man born blind could now be made able to see clearly the world that God has made.

Jesus goes on to teach that all of us sinners are blind in one way or another to God or to other people. And Jesus can cure us of our blindness through His mercy and forgiveness and enable us to see, because He is the Light of the world.

The Pharisees were not happy that Jesus worked this miracle. Wouldn't you think that they would be jumping for joy because a man blind from birth could now see? But the Pharisees were so blind to goodness, so ready to look for darkness rather than for light, that they were upset because Jesus worked this miracle on the Sabbath. Oh, for heaven's sake!

And yet, don't we do this from time to time? Rather than being happy that someone else has been richly blessed, we can think: "Why did this good fortune happen to them? They don't deserve it. That blessing should have been mine!"

So what did the Pharisees do? They called in the man's parents and asked if the one who was cured was really their son and, if so, was he blind from birth? "Yes, on both counts," they answered. "Then how was he healed, and who did it?" the Pharisees asked. "Ask him. He is of age. He can speak for himself," the parents responded.

The parents were afraid of being banned from the synagogue. Out of fear of rejection, they were blind to an opportunity to witness to Jesus Christ.

The Pharisees then called in the man who had been cured and asked him about Jesus. And he answered, "One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see." And they threw him out.

Later on, Jesus found him and asks, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" And he answers, "Who is He, sir, that I may believe?" "You have seen Him, and the one speaking with you is He." He responds, "I do believe, Lord." And he worshiped Him.

The man born blind was given not only physical sight to see Jesus, But his mind and heart were also opened to welcome Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

On this Fourth Sunday of Lent, three weeks before Easter, we ask the Lord to sharpen our vision that we may not be blinded by sin, that we may readily notice the needs of others and see opportunities before us to share the message of the Gospels. So that when our earthly pilgrimage is done we may come to an eternal dwelling place and see Our Lord face-to-face for the first time, and say to Him, "You are more beautiful than I could ever have imagined."