

Growing up in a dysfunctional home can shape the way we see the world. We may have learned to scan constantly for danger. We may have become experts at reading moods and avoiding conflict. Some of us learned to disappear. Others learned to control. Over time, these survival strategies become lenses through which we interpret everything. We may not even realize how much fear is driving our decisions until we find ourselves exhausted, resentful, or strangely numb in situations that do not actually require panic.

In this Sunday's gospel, Jesus restores sight to a man born blind (John 9:1, 6-9):

As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam" —which means Sent—. So he went and washed, and came back able to see. His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, "Isn't this the one who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is," but others said, "No, he just looks like him." He said, "I am."

The man's blindness was part of his story, not a moral failure. In the same way, many of our childhood adaptations were attempts to survive. They helped us get through what we could not control. But what once protected us may now limit us. We may people-please to stay safe. We may shut down when emotions rise. We may assume rejection before anyone has rejected us. We may carry an inner critic that speaks with absolute certainty and very little mercy.

Saint Paul offers a different identity (Ephesians 5:8-10):

You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

Living as children of light means letting Christ re-educate our hearts. We begin to notice when our reactions belong to the past. We learn to pause and ask, "What is actually happening right now?" In ACDH recovery, that pause is often the miracle. It is the moment we stop abandoning ourselves. The humility of Step One shows up here too. We admit that our old ways of coping do not work anymore, and we become willing to receive help.

The blind man is told, "Go wash." Healing includes participation. For us, that participation can look like attending meetings consistently, sharing honestly, and listening to others name patterns we thought were unique to us. It can look like setting boundaries without apology. It can look like praying in simple words when our nervous system is loud. It can also look like returning to the sacraments. In Confession, we bring shame into the light and receive mercy. In the Eucharist, Christ strengthens us to stay present and to choose love rather than fear.

The neighbors argue about whether the healed man is the same person. When we begin to change, we may face similar tension. Family members might prefer the old version of us who kept the peace. Friends may be confused when we stop over-explaining. Even we can feel unsettled, because healthier living may initially feel unfamiliar. Yet the gospel reminds us that transformation is real. We can

say, with increasing confidence, "I am," not because we have everything figured out, but because God is forming a truer self in us.

This Lent, we ask Jesus to restore our sight. We ask Him to soften our rigid defenses, quiet our inner critic, and teach us how to live as His beloved. The light does not erase our history, but it does give us a new future, one day at a time.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you noticed fear-based childhood patterns shaping how you interpret present relationships or conflict?
- What does it look like for you to "go wash" this week through a concrete recovery action or boundary?
- Where are you experiencing God inviting you to live more as a child of light rather than through the lens of past dysfunction?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

RESP. PS. Psalm 23: 1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

SECOND READING Ephesians 5:8-14

GOSPEL John 9:1-41

