

God calls us, he leads us out of the darkness and into the light. He chose us, every one of us. St John of the Cross speaks about accepting our mission to overcome our fears and desires to become closer to God. Detaching ourselves from the things of the world that get in the way of our relationship with Christ is crucial to fulfilling spiritual lives. Faith will guide us and enable us to shed our attachments and focus on God.

Darkness can be scary, as a father some advice I would give my children as they were getting older was to not make any big decisions when they were not in a good state of mind, especially at night. Darkness amplifies the feeling of despair and anguish when we are struggling, especially if we find ourselves alone. Everything seems scarier in the dark, whether it be the weather outside, or the dark place we may harbor in ourselves, the way we approach things can make all the difference in the outcome.

A young girl was getting frustrated and tired of life, so she asked her father what to do. Her father told her to bring an egg, two tea leaves, and a potato. He then brought out three vessels, filled them with water, and placed them on the stove.

Once the water was boiling, he told her to place the items into each pot and keep an eye on them. After 10 minutes, he asked her to peel the egg, peel the potato, and strain the leaves. she was left confused.

Her father explained, "Each item was placed into the same circumstance, boiling water. See how each responded differently?"

He continued, "The egg was soft, but is now hard. The potato was hard but is now soft. And the tea leaves, they changed the water itself."

The father then asked, "When adversity calls, we respond in the same manner as they have. Now, are you an egg, a potato, or tea leaves?"

In adversity we have a choice, we can quit, or we can press on. God did not create us to be quitters, he provides us with the spiritual tools we need to overcome the obstacles set before us. Much of this can be attributed to the perspective in which we view our situations. In the short story each of the items were exposed to the same exact circumstances, but the outcomes were different. When exposed to the heat the egg became hard and less vulnerable. The potato became soft and mushy, succumbing to the pressure applied. But the leaf responds by giving of itself to

change the situation around it. When we shed the things that bring about darkness, we can see things in a new light.

In today's gospel Christ himself reminds us that he is the light of the world. Who knows darkness better than a blind man? Historically, St. Thomas Aquinas noted that this verse provided an example of Jesus' healing of sin. He cites St. Augustine for the interpretation that the blind man represents humanity. Sin is spiritual blindness. When Jesus heals the blind man and allows him to see the light, he literally sees, which can be taken as a sign that he sees the error of his ways and wants to correct them by following the ways of God.

When Jesus spat in the dirt and made clay to rub on the blind man's eyes to heal him on the Sabbath day, most people just think, "Yuck, what a mess!" But Jesus was making a clear statement to the scribes and Pharisees. The Pharisees had twisted the commandments so much that they became a burden to men instead of the blessing that was intended by God. The Pharisees say that you cannot make clay on the Sabbath day, because that would be considered work. So, on the Sabbath, if he had to spit, he would wait until he came to a rock, a tree, or a wall, he would not spit on the dirt because he might make clay and defile the Sabbath. The scribes and Pharisees were so mad at Jesus for making clay on the Sabbath day that they did not even care that He had healed a man who had been blind from birth. (Avoiding spitting to make clay on the Sabbath was one of the Pharisee's traditions, not God's commandment.) Jesus did many other things on the sabbath to show where the Pharisees had gone wrong.

By this anointing of sorts, he healed the man of his blindness, cleansing him of his sins and granting him a new life. One he certainly would appreciate more after receiving this gift from Christ, the gift of new sight. Certainly not just a healing of his eyes, but also a conversion, an introduction to new life.

As we observe the Lenten season, we prepare to welcome the new members into the church during the Easter vigil. In the reading from Samuel, we hear how God chose David to be King. The lord instructed Samuel to select a king, not by appearance, but to see as God sees. Man, judges on appearance or lofty stature, but the Lord looks into the heart of the people he calls to himself. Samuel then anoints David with oil, afterwards the spirit of the Lord rushed over him.

In a similar fashion during the rite of confirmation which will be administered to the catechumens and candidates at the Easter vigil the priest or Bishop will anoint

each person saying these words “receive the Holy Spirit”. Receiving these gifts, answering the call of the Lord to be a member of his Church.

Just as Jesse sent for David in the field, the Lord depends on those who are members of the church to go and do his good work. As we go about our daily lives, we encounter people that are searching, sometimes they do not even know what they are searching for. We are called to be good witnesses of the Gospel of Christ. When we exercise these gifts of the Holy Spirit given to us in our own confirmation; wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord, we often exhibit characteristics that pique the interest of those around us. In doing this we can lead our neighbors to what we already know. We can lead them to the truth of the Gospel and the hope of eternal salvation.