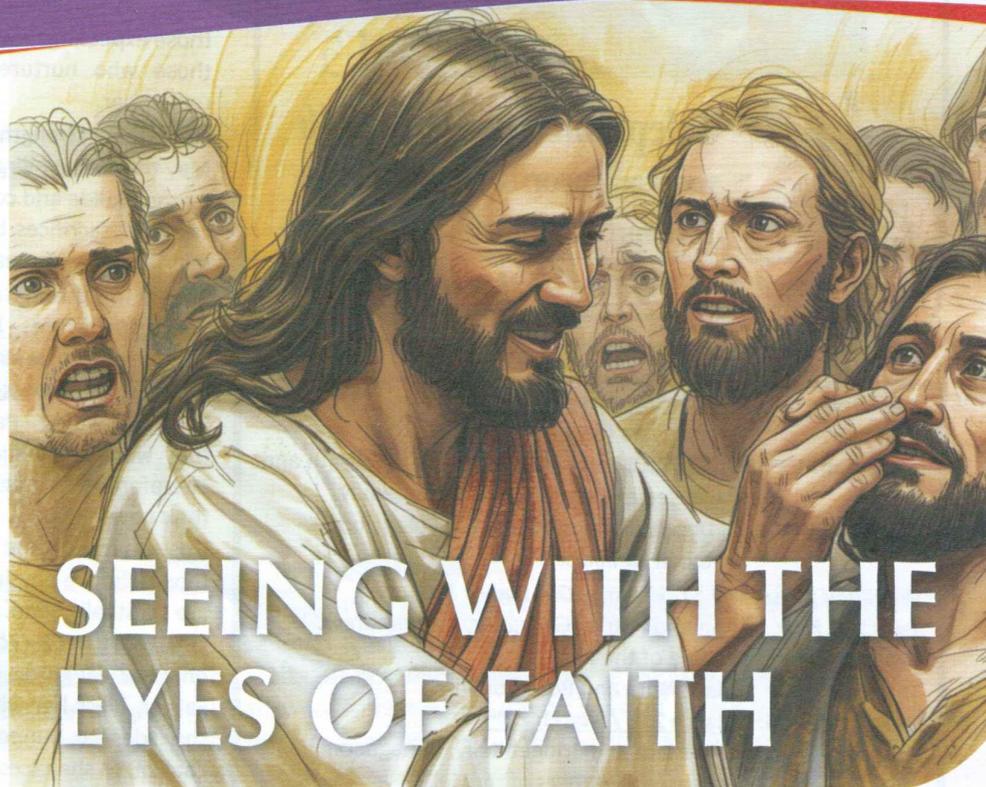




In Gospel times blind people relied on begging to survive, and there were many potential donors in the temple area. The people of the time would have assumed that a man's blindness from birth was a punishment for his sins or those of his parents. When the Apostles asked who was at fault, in John 9:1-41, Jesus said it was neither the man nor his parents, but rather to demonstrate the glory of God. The reference to using spittle and dust may have hearkened back to the creation of Adam from the dust of the earth. Jesus' healing of the blind man was symbolic of the fact that he was becoming a new creation.

Jesus told the man to complete his healing by bathing in the Pool of Siloam. Its sacred and healing properties were associated with the feast of Tabernacles, which was being celebrated at the time that this healing took place.

The next phase of this story was about the reactions of the people and the religious authorities to the healing of the blind man. His neighbours were incredulous. Jesus had performed a miracle on the sabbath, but the Pharisees were reluctant to accept that it was genuine; it could have been performed by sorcery or by collusion with evil spirits. So, their questioning was lengthy, drawn out and hostile. However, the man born blind remained sure



of what he had experienced. He asked his interrogators if they too wanted to become disciples of Jesus – thereby implying that he had already become one. They asserted that they were disciples of Moses, but who was Jesus? Undaunted, the man who was born blind pointed out that only someone who was close to God and did his will could have performed a deed of power such as healing blindness, (cf. Prov 15:29) 'He hears the prayer of the righteous.'

Sometime later, Jesus met the healed man in person. He asked him if he believed that Jesus was the Son of Man, a title taken from the book of Daniel. The man born blind seemed to be aware of the implications of what Jesus had

asked. We are told that he said, 'I believe,' and he worshipped him, thereby implying that he thought that Jesus was divine. Then Jesus made the paradoxical statement that some of those who are physically blind can see, while those who think that they are spiritually sighted are blind. ■

– Pat Collins



Reflection

Bow with the blind man before Jesus and ask him to reveal to your heart who he is for you.



Lesson

The blind man's gesture of worship now shows his faith in Jesus as divine. His seeing is one thing, his believing is something more.



Prayer

Like the blind man in today's Gospel, I pray that I may see: see what the world is really about, see your love around me, see that I can live in the light of the Lord all my days.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon (Cf. Jn 9:11.38)

The Lord anointed my eyes: I went, I washed, I saw and I believed in God.

Prayer after Communion

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world, illuminate our hearts, we pray, with the splendour of your grace, that we may always ponder what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty and love you in all sincerity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

