

**Fourth Sunday of Lent**  
**St. Francis of Assisi Parish – Belchertown, Massachusetts**  
**March 11, 2018**



Scripture Readings: 1 Samuel 16: 1, 6-7, 10-13 ✠ Psalm 23 ✠ Ephesians 5:8-14 ✠ John 9 1-41

**T**here is a story of a nine-year-old boy who was afraid of the dark. One night, his father told him to go out to the barn to feed the horses. The boy turned pale and began to tremble. With that, the father stepped out onto the porch with the boy, lit a lantern, and held it up. Then he said to his son, “How far can you see?”

The boy responded, “I can see halfway to the barn.” The father gave the lantern to his son and said, “Carry this halfway to the barn.” When the boy reached the halfway point, the father called out, “How far can you see now?”

The boy held up the lantern and shouted, “I can see the barn and the barn door.” The father called out, “Walk to the barn door.” When the boy shouted back that he had reached the barn door, the father called out, “Now open the door and tell me what you see.”

The boy opened the door and shouted back, “I can see inside the barn. I can see the horses!” “Good!” replied his father, “Now feed them!”

That night the boy lost his fear of the dark. More importantly, he took a giant step forward toward adulthood. He learned that some things in life cannot be done all at once. They have to be done step-by-step.

The first thing we notice about the miracle in our Gospel reading today is that it doesn’t take place all at once. It takes place gradually. It takes place step-by-step.

The man’s first response to Jesus, after being healed by Him, is to regard Him as just another *man*, just another person. Thus, when people ask the blind man about his cure, he responds, “This *man* called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went there and washed and was able to see.” So the blind man’s perception of Jesus was that He was an ordinary person just like himself.

The blind man’s second perception of Jesus comes when the Pharisees test him saying, “What do you have to say about [Jesus] since he opened

your eyes?” The blind man responds, saying, “He is a prophet.” So, now we see that his perception has taken a step forward. Jesus is now seen as a prophet, having more significance than an ordinary person of the time.



The man’s final perception of Jesus comes later that day when he meets Jesus once again. Jesus looks straight into the man’s eyes and asks, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” The man answers, “Who is He, sir, that I may believe in Him?” After Jesus tells the man that he is speaking with the Son of Man, the blind man said, “I do believe, LORD,” and he began to worship Him. And so the man’s final perception of Jesus takes that final leap forward and he places all his faith and hope in Jesus as Messiah. And so we see that the man’s faith did not come all at once; it came gradually, it came step-by-step.

Like the blind man, we, too, were called by Jesus to wash, not in the waters of Siloam, but in the waters of *Baptism*. Like the blind man, after we washed in the waters of baptism, we saw Jesus for the first time through the eyes of faith. And, like the blind man, our friendship with Jesus began to grow from that day forward.

As we matured as persons, so did our friendship with Jesus. And soon we discovered something very important: Friendship with Jesus is an ongoing journey. It’s something that never ends. It’s something in which we need to continue to move forward, step-by-step.

Lent is a time when Jesus reminds us that our friendship with Him is a journey, not a destination. It’s something that we must always go forward in, step-by-step. It’s a time when Jesus invites us to take a big step forward on that journey. It’s a time when Jesus invites us to deepen our friendship with Him. ✠