

Doesn't it drive you *crazy* when you try to have a conversation with a *know-it-all*!?

No matter *what* you say, they just won't *listen*!

Why *should* they? -- If they think they know it all *already*!?

And so our blood *boils* when we encounter these folks -- Folks who walk around acting like they have seen *everything*. And *yet*, truth be told, They *stubbornly* and *smugly* **choose** to be *blind* and *ignorant* -- And *closed off* -- from the *blessings* and *lessons* of the people God puts in our path.

Sometimes our snap judgments and biases *deny* God's light from shining on us, by *unusual* suspects -- by people we'd rather avoid, or think ourselves superior to. Just think of the First Reading -- Not even David's own *father* could believe his youngest and lowliest boy, Could be chosen by God to shepherd his people.

Sometimes we may even be guilty of it *ourselves*: Not wanting to listen to another with an open heart -- Or condemning even the *potential* for goodness in another, whom we've judged harshly or rashly based on outward appearances we deem *inferior*.

But *again* and *again* and *again*! -- God *lifts up* the lowly. And He *reduces* the *haughty*, the *smug*, the *proud*, the *know-it-all*. Our God preferred the humble Abel over the arrogant and envious Cain. Our God preferred little David over the narcissistic King Saul. And our God chose to unite His divinity to our humanity in a poor little babe, who became a backwater itinerant preacher, who would be shamefully put to death like a slave criminal on the Cross.

Today's Gospel challenges *all* of us to *be open* -- To *see* -- To *see the light* -- To *see the light* of the *Risen Christ* in our midst -- *Especially* among the *lowly* -- Those who *know* they have much to learn -- Those whose humility makes them almost *invisible* -- Like the little child tugging on mom's apron strings with his *hundredth* interruption; Like the beggar on the street we avoid like he's just a hole in the sidewalk; Like the enemy we refuse to love -- Preferring rather to love the *grudge* we hold onto, or the resentment and hatred we harbor; Or the person we *shun* because they're not part of our *tribe* -- they're just not *one* of us.

The *Pharisees* in today's Gospel are a warning for *us*: Don't be a *know-it-all*; don't judge a book by its cover; don't be *blind* to the light of Christ coming into our midst in the lowliest of ways.

The man born blind was just such a lowly figure. People assumed this blind beggar was a sinner.

But *we* know *two* things at *least*: *First*: We're *all* sinners. *Second*: Jesus came to *save* the sinner! That's *The GOOD News*!

The *heart* of the Gospel we *rejoice* in on this Laetare Sunday -- The Fourth Sunday of Lent -- a Sunday of Rejoicing: That -- no matter *our* little Lenten sacrifices -- *Jesus* has *already* made *the* sacrifice so that we may share in His life.

This Laetare Sunday -- or *Rejoice* Sunday -- Is just a little *glimpse* of what lies beyond the *Cross!*

It's another transfiguration -- an epiphany -- A *reminder* -- that the Cross is just the *beginning* of the story -- *Not* the end! That Christ's death resulted in His *resurrection*. That darkness and death are *defeated* already -- No matter *what* tragedies we meet in this life.

But we are given a *choice*: Are we like the cynical and fraudulent Pharisee? *Rejecting* the Risen Christ? Despite our *capacity* to see? *Preferring* blindness and darkness?

Or are we like the man born blind, whose stance before God is that of a *beggar* -- Whose *hands* and *hearts* are *open* to the love and compassion of Jesus who was just passing by?

My friends, don't let Jesus just pass by! *See Him here! In our midst!* And let Him *stay* in our hearts -- Hearts that *know* they are needy for the love of God. Hearts *open* to the light of Christ.

My brothers and sisters of Holy Trinity Parish, before we can see Christ in our midst, we must first *let* ourselves *be seen* by His almighty compassion. We are His *body* here in Cohoes, joined to His body in the Albany Diocese, in communion with His Body in the suffering universal church across the *world*.

We are no strangers to darkness and to struggles, to illness, loss, and death.

And we *keenly* suffer in the social and spiritual isolation of the Coronavirus restrictions.

And we *hunger* and *thirst* for Jesus' precious body and blood -- And for the encouragement and comfort that gathering together brings.

But know *this*: Jesus has our *backs*. He has *already* saved our lives. Do *not* lose heart. While we cannot be in physical communion right now, we *are* One Body. So pray for deliverance from the blight of this virus, and the perils of choosing to be blind to Jesus in our midst.

Pray for healing -- physical, psychological, financial, and above all, *spiritual*. Be children of the *light!* Let Christ into the darkness. And *be* Christ's light for those who still cower in darkness and blindness.

Pray for the Universal Church. Pray for our Parish Community at Holy Trinity. And no matter what comes our way, *rejoice!* For Jesus light has shone upon us. And no darkness shall overcome His holy light.