



PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY TO THE PONTIFICAL GOOD FRIDAY HOLY LAND COLLECTION

Fourth Sunday of Lent:

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

In this reflection from the gospel of John, we see the Pharisees' reaction to the miracle of Jesus healing the blind man. Initially, the Pharisees are irritated that Jesus would dare cure on the Sabbath, and after some investigation, they conclude no man sent from God would ever violate the Law of Moses; therefore, Jesus cannot be from God.

But as the Gospel story unfolds, we see increasingly how the theme of light and darkness comes through in the developing narrative. The Pharisees cannot accept who Jesus is, despite the fact that he performed a miracle that can only possibly come from God. In their darkness of unbelief, the Pharisees become the symbol of the darkness of the human heart and mind. But Jesus, in the midst of all this darkness, reminds his disciples that "I am the light of the world."

In Genesis, the Word of God entered the world in light and created everything new. In this gospel, the apostle John declares that Jesus *is* the light of the human race, and that life and light are intimately intertwined. The story of the blind man in the gospel of John is a powerful reminder of this. This story becomes a powerful demonstration of how the Christian community can live by the principles of light and dark.

As Jesus is the Word made flesh, he shines as light over the darkness. Unfortunately, this light will be snuffed out by the forces of darkness, ultimately resulting in his crucifixion. As such, we need to keep our eyes open and our hearts filled with faith in God to keep ourselves and others in the light.



Light streaming in over the tomb in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The healing of the blind man is a striking illustration of Jesus' divine claim to be the light of the world. The Jews judge Jesus for worldly reasons – the man's blindness. Despite their blatant sin, we discover that it is actually the infirmity that enlightens a person.

In our own day, the Christians in the Holy Land live under conditions of adversity and strife. Forces of darkness are constantly seeking to afflict them simply because they are children of the Light. Please consider making a generous contribution to the Pontifical Good Friday Collection to help preserve the Christian presence and preserve the Holy Sites in the Holy Land.

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