

HOMILY ~ FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT MARCH 18-19, 2023

Psychological research has found that people tend to view the world in two different ways. One group tends to see the world as a good, safe and beautiful place where interesting and meaningful things happen and our lives have a purpose. The second group tends to see the world as a bad, dangerous place where life is dull and does not have much meaning because things that happen are random. We could also call this *glass half full* and *glass half empty* people. Psychologists used to think that our experiences shape our view of the world. If that were true, they would expect to find that people who live in high crime areas would be more likely to see the world as a more dangerous place than those who live in low crime areas. That is not true. There is no significant difference in worldview. Many studies have been done looking at different factors and, as it turns out, our worldview affects how we view our experiences. Our worldview comes first.

I think we have a good example of this in the Gospel today. A number of people observe a miracle, a man born blind who has his vision restored by Jesus. First of all, the people ask Jesus if the blindness is due to the man's sin or his parent's sin. We know that blindness is not caused by sin so we like to just kind of blow past that, but let's look at that a little more closely. We like to find blame, don't we? If we can find someone or something to blame, it makes us feel that we have control over situations where we really have no control. If we find someone to blame, it relieves our responsibility to help them. We do that sometimes. We blame the poor person for being poor. They are just lazy and do not want to work. Another example, I saw recently that newscasters no longer call car accidents, accidents. They must call them crashes because somebody is at fault, and there is somebody to blame. This is a *glass half empty* view of the world. Jesus tells the people no one sinned, but God can work through difficult situations. Regardless of whether or not there is blame, God helps them and so should we. Next, the people who observe the miracle refuse to believe it. That is not the man born blind, it just looks like him. *Glass half empty*. We do that sometimes. I hear people say isn't it fully how things just seem to work out? I don't think they just work out by chance. I think God is helping us all the time, but we do not always recognize it. If we were left to our own devices, we would have destroyed the world a long time ago. Next, we have the Pharisees. They see Jesus making clay and putting it on the man's eyes, and the blind man washing in the pool of Siloam. They were both working on the Sabbath,

they are both sinners, so neither one of them could have done anything good. *Glass half empty.* We do that sometimes, too. They are Republican, or they are Democrat, they cannot be doing anything good. They want to disprove the miracle, so they go to his parents. If my adult son was born blind and he had his sight restored by Jesus, I would be rejoicing. But what do they do? We are not getting involved. He is an adult. Go ask him. They are afraid they would be expelled from the synagogue. *Glass half empty.* What about the blind man? I think he was *glass half full.* He did not ask Jesus to heal him; but he let Jesus put the clay on his eyes, and he went to wash in the pool at Siloam. If it were *glass half empty,* he would have said that is ridiculous. I am not doing that, and he would not have been healed. All of the sighted people in the Gospel reading were spiritually blind because of their view of the world. Only the blind man gained spiritual sight. He accepted Jesus as the Messiah.

Our faith gives a reason to have a positive view of the world. God created this beautiful world for us to live in, and it is very good. God loves us unconditionally and wants what is best for us. God is with us always, and he is always caring for us. Life is not always easy, but God will bring good things out of difficult situations if we are open to it. I think miracles happen all of the time, but do we recognize and accept them? Are you *glass half full* or *glass half empty*? That will affect how you view your life experiences. The good news is that if you are *glass half empty,* you can change. That is what conversion is all about, coming to really believe the truths of our faith, and seeing that we have every reason to believe the *glass is half full.*

Love and Peace,

Fr. Jim