

Dear Padre,

I am left-handed. Why doesn't the church allow the sign of the cross to be made left-handed?

A Catholic who is unable to make the sign of the cross with the right hand is certainly permitted to do so with the left. There is no rule against it. When Pope Saint John Paul II injured his right arm, he used his left hand to impart his blessing.

The sign of the cross is a sacramental, one of the symbols that identifies you as a Roman Catholic. Just like all such symbolic gestures, there is an expected uniformity. To use a secular example, at a University of Texas football game, fans of the Longhorns give the "hook-'em horns" sign. You wouldn't give the "thumbs-up" sign instead. It would be confusing.

It's true that at one time, the left hand was associated with evil. Jesus sends the goats to sit at his left and the sheep to his right. (See Matthew 25:33.) And, throughout the Scriptures, we read that Jesus sits at the right hand of God. (See Mark 16:19.) The word "sinister" is from the Latin *sinister*, meaning "left."

Left-handedness is no longer associated with evil. If you wish to make the sign of the cross with your left hand, you may. But do consider why you are doing it. Most left-handed people have no trouble using their right hand for many simple tasks. If your purpose is a bit rebellious, maybe realize that signifying unity with your brothers and sisters in Christ is more important. ●



ALFONSO / CATHOLIC

Fr. Thomas M. Santa, CSsR / DearPadre.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

Monday

MARCH 16

Lenten Weekday

Is 65:17-21

Jn 4:43-54

Tuesday

MARCH 17

Lenten Weekday

Ez 47:1-9, 12

Jn 5:1-16

Wednesday

MARCH 18

Lenten Weekday

Is 49:8-15

Jn 5:17-30

Thursday

MARCH 19

St. Joseph, Spouse

of the Blessed

Virgin Mary

2 Sm 7:4-5a,

12-14a, 16

Rom 4:13, 16-18,

22

Mt 1:16, 18-21,

24a or Lk 2:41-

51a

Friday

MARCH 20

Lenten Weekday

Wis 2:1a, 12-22

Jn 7:1-2, 10,

25-30

Saturday

MARCH 21

Lenten Weekday

Jer 11:18-20

Jn 7:40-53

Sunday

MARCH 22

Fifth Sunday

of Lent

Ez 37:12-14

Rom 8:8-11

Jn 11:1-45 or

11:3-7, 17, 20-27,

33b-45



MARCO IACOBELLI / SHUTTERSTOCK

A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

Dear brothers and sisters, let us trustfully bring our ailments before Jesus, and also those of our loved ones; let us bring the pain of those who feel lost and without a way out. Let us cry out for them too, and we will be certain that the Lord will hear us.

GENERAL AUDIENCE, ROME, JUNE 11, 2025

Our Parish COMMUNITY

March 15, 2026

Fourth Sunday of Lent (A)

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a / Ephesians 5:8-14 /

John 9:1-41 or 9:1, 6-9, 13-17, 34-38



Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth.

EPHESIANS 5:8B-9

Born Free

MIGUEL DULICK

Today's gospel, the healing of the man born blind, is a terrific story that includes many details. Notice that Jesus, who has his own agenda, "so that the works of God might be made visible through him," does not even wait for the man to ask to be healed. But the man is a willing subject, allowing mud and saliva to be smeared on his eyes, agreeing to go to Siloam and wash. And, he's a quick learner. At first, all he knows is "the man called Jesus" healed him. Soon, however, he's calling Jesus "a prophet." Then, as a "division" ("schism" in the original) opens among the authorities and even in his own family, he defends Jesus' divine calling when the Pharisees mock Jesus as a "sinner." Finally, expelled from the synagogue, the man finds Jesus waiting for him with the ultimate revelation: he sees before him the Son of Man, "and he worshiped him."

Now, maybe we weren't born blind, but I venture to say a lot of us are short-sighted. Do I "see the works of God"? Starting from "the man called Jesus," do I keep going forward in faith, defending Jesus when he is mocked by people, to a deeper, fuller reality than even my own family may not understand? All the way to adoration, worship, a total handing over of my whole self to the Son of Man? Or, as Thomas would later say, when his own eyes were opened, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). ●



LEARN ABOUT THE AUTHORS OF OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

Reflect

This week, I will pray for my eyes to be opened to something important for me to see.