



ST. MARY'S
ON THE HIGHLANDS

The Fourth Sunday in Lent



Lent IV, March 15

Collect

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

John 9:1-41

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the

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John 9:1-41 (continued)

sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.”

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.” He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?” Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

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John 9:1-41 (continued)

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

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HEALING SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

By Elizabeth Wyatt



John 9:1-41 tells us the story of Jesus healing a man who was born blind. This is the first reported healing of someone blind from birth in recorded history at that time. Truly, God is the only one who could have healed this man. Yet the Pharisees could only see and find error in Jesus' healing this man on the Sabbath Day according to Jewish Law. This miracle is as wonderful to me as all of Jesus' other healings throughout scripture. As I pray and contemplate the Holy Spirit's guidance during this reflection, it is immediately clear what God is guiding me to see and absorb. Although I am not physically blind, I have been spiritually blind at many times in my life to acknowledge and accept spiritual opportunities that the Holy Spirit has put before me.

When I have allowed myself to absorb the light of Christ and to fully embrace the gift of serving others, it is then that I truly feel the presence of the Holy Spirit within me. I am sometimes challenged in my blindness and unable to or unwilling to see what God has placed in front of me. When I have followed his will, my soul glows with Christ's light. I pray during this Lenten season and beyond that I will reveal God's love and glory to others by not "being blind" to the spiritual opportunities God puts in my life.

Through Christ, the Lenten revelation and truly the message from Christ to me has allowed me to better focus and to actively seek ways that I can serve others. While serving others, it allows the light of Christ to shine brightly in my soul, in servitude, and in my everyday life. Glory to God!

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Hymn 152 “Kind Maker of the world, O hear”

Kind maker of the world, O hear the fervent prayers with many a tear
Poured forth by all the penitent who keep this holy fast of Lent!

Each heart is manifest to thee; thou knowest our infirmity;
Now we repent, and seek thy face; grant unto us thy pard'ning grace.

Spare us, O Lord, who now confess our sins and all our wickedness,
And, for the glory of thy Name, our weaken'd souls to health reclaim.

Give us the self-control that springs from abstinence in outward things;
That from each stain and spot of sin, our souls may keep the fast within.

Grant, O thou blessèd Trinity; Grant, O unchanging Unity;
That this our fast of forty days may work our profit and thy praise! Amen.

Hymn 152
“Kind maker of the world, O hear”
Words: Att. Gregory the Great (540-604); ver.
Hymnal 1940, alt.
Tune: *A la venue de Noel*, melody from *Fleurs des
noels*, 1535
Click the image to listen.



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KIND MAKER OF THE WORLD

By Mike Allen



God is known by many names – Yahweh, Jehovah, Abba, Lord, Father, Creator, even the Great Physician- the list continues. Students of Hebrew Scripture often recognize dozens of distinct titles for God—some traditions count more than seventy. Yet of all these names, none feel more gentle, or more tender than this simple phrase, Kind Maker of this world.

This ancient prayer, attributed to St. Gregory the Great (540–604), was most likely prayed during Lenten evening vespers.

The opening verse is a humble petition to God from those earnestly seeking to uphold the discipline of the Lenten fast.

The second verse acknowledges a truth woven throughout Scripture: God knows our hearts completely. It echoes the spirit of David’s confession in Psalm 139. “O Lord, you have searched me and known me... you discern my thoughts from afar.” Nothing we attempt to conceal remains hidden from the One who fashioned us. Yet this verse also reminds us that the God who sees our weakness is the same God who offers pardon to all who humbly seek it.

Verse three turns our attention to God as the Great Physician—not tending to wounds of the body, but gently healing the deeper ailments of the soul.

In the penultimate verse, we are urged to tend to the inner condition of our hearts, knowing that when our inner life is rightly ordered, we are equipped to overcome the countless distractions that surround us in daily life.

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Kind Maker of the world (continued)

In the final verse, I hear a prayer rising in harmony with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—a request that all I pour into this Lenten season would strengthen me throughout my life and be found pleasing in the sight of the Kind Maker of the world.

If you find yourself unsure of how to fast during Lent, you might simply begin by sitting with the words of hymn 152 each day. Let its prayerful verses guide your heart into the rhythm of the season.
