

FATHER ANTON'S WORDS OF WISDOM: I think all of us have heard the expression "I can't see the forest for the trees!" Although the young man in today's gospel is physically blind, like most of us; he had a lot more going on. Blind from birth Christ heals him; he makes a mud paste and tells him to wash his eyes and immediately he can see. Not sure who it really was that healed him he tells the story in its entirety to the Religious authorities of the day who find it hard to believe. Since the healing miracles of Jesus were so different than anything anyone had ever experienced, not only the people, but also the Priests, the Scribes and the Pharisees found them hard to accept. You and I are often not much different. We witness healing in the lives of others and we greet it with doubt. "You can't change a leopard's spots," is another one of our favourite sayings; yet Christ made it clear that "with God all things are possible." We, too, often go around blind; we see the alcoholic, but we don't see their pain; we see the addict, and we don't see their burdens; we see the wealthy, and we often don't see their discontent; we see the oppressed in our society, and we don't see their struggle for acceptance; we see... yes - but only that which is easy to see. Judging others is easier than being compassionate. Blaming others is easier than owning my own weakness and accepting responsibility for my own life. Just as the Jewish authorities refused to believe that Jesus had the power to heal, we at times are no better.

Prayer is often filled with doubt rather than faith. Our lives are often filled with self-pity rather than responsibility. We complain because it seems we refuse to see our blessings. Our blindness in so many ways is much worse than the man born blind from birth in today's Gospel - he had a reason not to see, and he probably had better reason than you and I for the "woe is me" whine; yet healed, he recognized the power of Christ and his life was changed forever. Our lives, too, can be changed forever if we only recognize our blindness in those situations that tend to bring us down. If we truly seek to be healed of our blindness; it probably won't be with a mud paste, but rather with the gifts offered to us through the Holy Spirit. We are invited to share in the anointing of the sick, not only when we are knocking on heaven's door, but more importantly; anytime we seek the healing power of Jesus and his comforting spirit. The Holy Spirit that we remember and celebrate next Sunday is not only life-giving, but LIFE-CHANGING. We are gifted with Holy Eucharist - the uniting of the divine with the human; "Sins forgiven, life restoring, blessings on all to bring," we sing in one of our most beloved Communion hymns. Yes open your eyes and see how good life is when shared with a loving God

Let us pray: *LOVING GOD, open the eyes of my heart that I might live the Gospel of Your Son. Open the eyes of my mind that I may be open to the life-giving and life-changing gifts of Your Holy Spirit. Lord, give me courage to look at my life in honest... to see the whole picture, so that, united with You, I may grow in grace and wisdom. Amen.*