**Homily Fourth Sunday of Lent 2020**

**Deacon Bill Stein**

**How are you all holding up? Two weeks ago Terry and I were at Sunday Mass in Ft. Meyers, Florida. The priest said “My whole life long all ‘Corona’ meant to me was a frosty mug of beer with a lime wedge in it!” Jesus taught us “Wherever two or more are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst” now it’s “Wherever ten or more are gathered, you can’t go there!”**

**You know where the word quarantine comes from? Quarantine means 40 days. It comes from Lent. So we’re all in quarantine right now!**

**We’re in quarantine during Lent. It was taken from the penitential discipline of the church. For a penance, you’d have 40 days of penance.**

**Happy Lent. Enjoy your quarantine.**

**I must admit that every Lent I watch Monty Python’s irreverent “The Life of Brian”, it’s the story of a baby, Brian, who was born just down the street from Jesus, mistaken at first by the Wise men as the Messiah, and his life parallels Jesus’ in the worst way. In one scene he is making his way through the crowded streets of Jerusalem when he passes a bunch of lepers begging, one man who looks perfectly fine calls out “A denarii for an old ex leper?” Brain says “Ex Leper?” “I was cured sir” “Who cured you?” “Jesus did sir, one day there I was making a perfectly good living as a leper and Jesus cured me without so much as a ‘by your leave’ he did.”**

**All kidding aside this is what happens in today’s Gospel. Jesus comes upon a man blind from birth, he does not asked to be healed, but Jesus selects him to be an example to the Pharisees. He chooses to heal him by a sacramental way, he makes mud and smears it on his blind eyes and tells him to go wash in the pool of Siloam which means “Sent”. The man is given a mission, which also means to be sent, as are we, if he had chosen not to accept it, his eyes would not have been opened. Jesus offers us the same choice, if we follow his direction, our eyes will be opened.**

**He is of course cured and the Pharisees go crazy. They attack his parents with questions, “Is he your son? Has he always been blind?” I love their reply, “He’s old enough, ask him yourself!” They question him and he answers truthfully, they keep after him “This man is not from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath! “Again they keep after him saying “Give God praise! We know that this man is a sinner… what did he do to you and how did he open your eyes?” He answered “I told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too”?**

**The cured man eventually meets Jesus and worships him and Jesus says. “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind.”**

**The Pharisees replied “Surely we are not blind are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying. ‘We see’, so your sin remains.”**

**Knowledge is light — an inner light comes on when we understand something — which is why we say: I see! But this "seeing" is insight, not just eyesight. And with insight comes power.**

**In today's Gospel Jesus enables a blind man to "see".  He starts by giving him eyesight, but by the end of the story this man also has insight. An inner light has come on regarding who Jesus is. Now not only does he see, he understands! But not so the other people in the story. They have eyesight but no insight. They see but do not understand.**

**You and I are like the people in this story: there are certain things to which we are blind, regarding which we lack insight. Sometimes this is willful blindness due to fear. Sometimes we are blinded by hatred or pride. But it need not be that way. Jesus is the “Light of the World” and he invites us to be like the man he heals in today's Gospel: open and courageous, trying our best to live in the light ourselves-- making sure we have good information, all the facts--and then striving courageously to bring the light to others. After all, ignorance is not bliss. It's also no excuse!**

**May God bless you and may Jesus Christ be praised!**