

Gospel Reflections:
JOHN 9

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9/27/2007 AD

JOHN 9:1-18

- ¹ And as JESUS passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth.
- ² And His disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?
- ³ JESUS answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of GOD should be made manifest in him.
- ⁴ I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.
- ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am The Light of the world.
- ⁶ When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,
- ⁷ And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.
- ⁸ The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?
- ⁹ Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.
- ¹⁰ Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?
- ¹¹ He answered and said, A Man that is called JESUS made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.
- ¹² Then said they unto him, Where is He? He said, I know not.
- ¹³ They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.
- ¹⁴ And it was The Sabbath Day when JESUS made the clay, and opened his eyes.
- ¹⁵ Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.
- ¹⁶ Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This Man is not of GOD, because He keepeth not The Sabbath Day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.
- ¹⁷ They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of Him, that He hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a Prophet.
- ¹⁸ But the Jews did not believe concerning Him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

See the hardheartedness of these religious leaders, that they would persecute GOD Himself because The Lord healed this poor blind man on The Sabbath Day! Is it evil to do good on The Sabbath? Would GOD have us refrain from saving lives, preaching The Word of Life that souls might live, lessening human suffering and feeding the needy on The Sabbath Day? Does The Almighty ordain that all human life stop on The Sabbath Day? Of course not, for He ordains only that all non-life sustaining work cease on That Day. Why? So that we may think on things of Heaven; to dwell in unity together as the people of GOD before His Presence; to seek His loving face and rest together with The Creator one Day in seven.

What does Moses command us in The Ten Commandments?

זְכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ:

ZACHOR 'ET-YOM HASHSHABAT LEQADDESHO. Or literally, You continue to always remember The Day [of] The Sabbath for to be continuously and absolutely always keeping it sanctified and holy! Specifically in EXODUS 20:8-11, "Remember The Sabbath Day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But The Seventh Day is The Sabbath of The LORD thy GOD: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: For *in* six days The LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested The Seventh Day: wherefore The LORD blessed The Sabbath Day, and hallowed it."

But as CHRIST explains in MARK 2:27, "...The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for The Sabbath!" If we will honour His Day of Rest, The LORD will in turn honour us in His provisions. The blind man was happy to receive healing by the hand of The Lord on The Sabbath Day. GOD commands that works of mercy, life and love continue even - and most especially - on The Sabbath Day!

Do we love GOD? Then we will love our neighbours enough to do them good always, most especially on The Lord's Day! The Pharisees object because their first love was not GOD, but themselves! Therefore they were not capable of truly loving others as and above themselves. So in their eyes, this healing miracle of The Lord was seen in their own darkness as a threat to their claim of the applause of men. What does The LORD require, but what we read in MICAH 6:7-8, "Will The LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression, the fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth The LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!"

Outward observance of The Law for its own sake does not please GOD, but rather works of mercy and love, and the living out of The Divine Law in that same mercy and love which He has for us! This is exactly what CHRIST calls us to in The Beatitudes of MATTHEW 5:3-10, "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is The Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see GOD. Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of GOD. Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is The Kingdom of Heaven."

JOHN 9:19-34

¹⁹ And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

²⁰ His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

²¹ But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.

²² These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that He was CHRIST, he should be put out of the synagogue.

²³ Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

²⁴ Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give GOD the praise: we know that This Man is a sinner.

²⁵ He answered and said, Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

²⁶ Then said they to him again, What did He to thee? how opened He thine eyes?

²⁷ He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be His disciples?

²⁸ Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art His disciple; but we are Moses' disciples.

²⁹ We know that GOD spake unto Moses: as for This Fellow, we know not from whence He is.

³⁰ The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes.

³¹ Now we know that GOD heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of GOD, and doeth His will, him He heareth.

³² Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

³³ If this man were not of GOD, He could do nothing.

³⁴ They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

What a strange sight this is, that this presumably unlearned formerly blind man – made whole literally by the very hand of GOD, Whom he beheld face to face – now teaches those who should be learned in the heart of The Law of GOD, but whom themselves walk in their own self-imposed darkness! “What, would you also become the disciples of JESUS?” asks the healed man! “We are the disciples of Moses!” the Pharisees reply! How sad that, though these learned men sat in the seat of Moses, they neither knew Moses nor The Eternal One Whom he served!

Oh, they knew of Moses, and they knew of The Almighty from a distance. They were schooled in The Law of GOD as a computer is schooled in logic and knowledge, enabling it to process data according to certain predetermined flow charts. If this, then that. If given A, then according to the program, B must follow – no matter what and in all situations equally. Achtung, all hail the self-righteous army of the religious lawyers as they go a marching on, trampling over injured lives and suffering souls, oblivious that they themselves provide not a remedy but an exacerbation of the disease of sin!

GOD forbid then, that we should be Christian Pharisees, blindly applying The Word of GOD without love and mercy upon broken lives and lost souls, that we also should bring more evil than we cure! We should, with David, seek to be as our Father in Heaven is towards us, as we read in PSALM 86:1-5, “Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I *am* poor and needy. Preserve my soul; for I *am* holy: O Thou my GOD, save Thy servant that trusteth in Thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto Thee daily. Rejoice the soul of Thy servant: for unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For Thou, Lord, *art* good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee!”

JOHN 9:35-41

³⁵ JESUS heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on The Son of GOD?

³⁶ He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?

³⁷ And JESUS said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee.

³⁸ And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him.

³⁹ And JESUS said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

⁴⁰ And some of the Pharisees which were with Him heard These Words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also?

⁴¹ JESUS said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

Now we go back to the first question of the Apostles to JESUS in the opening of JOHN 9, “Lord, was this man’s blindness inflicted upon him by GOD because of sin, his or his parents?” The Lord emphatically replies that, in this case, Divine Providence had ordained that this man might be blind, so that The Glory of GOD in JESUS CHRIST might be seen by this man and all those around him. How overawing and great is The Providence of GOD, that He should have set up all that was needed to create this situation from before the creation of the universe, that this one miracle of The Messiah should bring this man – and so many others in his life and down through the ages – to saving faith in CHRIST!

Yes, many injuries, diseases and deaths are directly or indirectly due to the sins of men and/or those around them. Think of the HIV positive baby who, having contracting the AIDS virus from his mother because sinned by engaging in promiscuous sex, will certainly die. Think of the man whose spinal cord is severed in a car accident because he was drinking alcohol while driving. Think of the earnest Christian woman whose idol becomes cigarettes, so much so that she destroys the earthly temple of her body, dying of cancer.

And yet we may think of many alternative examples where illness, injury and death come upon the heads of people for no apparent sinful fault of their own, nor of anyone around them. Creation has been contaminated with imperfection, sin and death by The Fall. CHRIST’s First Advent, and now The Church on earth, are progressively

working to bring creation – and mankind – back into a state of holy perfection that GOD first made them. But this process will not be completed until CHRIST comes again. Until then, suffering, pain, sorrow and death will continue to afflict men.

But we may make sense of our suffering when we are saved in JESUS CHRIST. “Suffering, a consequence of Original Sin, acquires a new meaning: it becomes a participation in the saving work of JESUS” CHRIST in us and through us when we offer it back up to GOD in The Name of His Son. This when our passion becomes united in “union with The Passion of CHRIST.” [Catechism of The Catholic Church, # 1521]

As Saint Paul says in ROMANS 8:22, “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” As The Grace of GOD expands from ancient Israel into The Church to the four corners of the earth, the groaning becomes less because the disease and its pathology become less. But until The Lord Himself comes again to establish Heaven on earth, creation shall continue to groan in the agony of sin and its results. And men, even though we be saved in CHRIST, continue to groan with it in this life, until we ourselves reach perfection in Heaven Above, where there will be no more pain and sorrow, and where CHRIST Himself shall wipe away every tear!