
PRAY WITH ME

God of light,
enlighten us with your wisdom and love.

During these Lenten days,
increase our capacity to see others as you do
and to love and serve them
as our calling from you.

We ask this in your holy
and light-giving name.

AMEN.



FOURTH WEEK OF LENT



**“I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will not
walk in darkness
but will have the light of life.”**

JOHN 8:12



Seeing relies on light.

Because of light, we are able to make out distinct shapes and objects through contrasting colors and shadows. Consider, for example, the difference in our appreciation of a landscape from first light to full light. At first, it is just suggestive of what is before us. Later, the scene is all color and contrasting shapes and hues. Contrast, distinction, difference fill most of our hours and days. For human beings, this work of separating out has physical, mental and spiritual dimensions.

From the perspective of faith, to see things truly is to see them both in their distinctness and in the light of the whole of which they are a part. We do the first instinctively. The second is harder and part of a lifelong spiritual labor that we are invited to foster during this Lenten retreat. We live in a culture that exceeds in making distinctions. Too often this is for the purpose of barring some people from communities of relationship. With families in crisis and record numbers of migrants and refugees on the move the world over, alienation and movement are everywhere.

This Sunday's gospel of the man who was born blind is such a story. A man who had been born blind is given sight by Jesus. This caused division among his family and friends and within his religious community. Rejected by the religious leaders for his acknowledgment of Jesus, his life became a judgment on them in Jesus' strong words: "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind" (John 9:39).

If our seeing leads to the sense that we alone see things correctly, we are in trouble. True "seeing" is an act of community, a labor of mutual discernment of what God asks of us in our time and place. This leads to the humble understanding that in this life we see as St. Paul emphasizes, "For now we see as through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1Cor. 13:12).

Still, our task is to try to see things as God does, whole and in relationship. With humility we long and pray for such spiritual insight and acknowledge that our blindness, our partial view, is so that God may be the true light in our life. This is the conversion asked of us in this holy season.

As we in Catholic health care hunger for such humility, we cannot help but honor others' inherent dignity as they come to us in need. We will see each in God's light, as a unique moment of God's grace in this world and with an unrepeatable web of relationships. This light reveals that there is no "other." All are one — each of us a distinct yet intimately connected moment in the great rebirthing of that garden of right relationships where the whole story began.

FOR REFLECTION

"Light unshared is darkness.

To be light indeed, it must shine out.

It is of the very essence of light, that it is for others."

(George MacDonald)

- ◇ Am I grateful for light in my life, and do I pray to see things more as God sees them?
- ◇ What relationships are calling me to conversion of heart?
- ◇ Who is the "other" that I fear, and what will I do to overcome this fear?