

Fourth Sunday of Lent
Sunday, March 6, 2005
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Today, if we listen to the first reading in the gospel, it talks about blindness, sight, seeing things the way God sees them, and seeing them the way the world sees them. Now sometimes we are here and we come to church and we think, "Well, I see things the way God sees them." Like the Pharisees. You do realize that when Jesus is speaking today, He is speaking to us. Just a thought. That sometimes every one of us here sees things the way the world sees things. In lots of ways! You know, remember the song "Amazing Grace." You know that song, don't you? "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me," not this other garbage, you know, the new ones. You know, and some Catholics don't want to be called wretches! So they change the words to "save and set me free." Shut up!! It's "saved a wretch like me!" Let's call it like it is!!! We're wretches!!! Any body here a wretch? Me! You too! We're wretches! Aren't you ecstatic? We are saved, though we are wretches. That's a great thing. "Saved a wretch like me." "I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see." So what we need to do is know that in ourselves we're wretches! Te-hee!! But in God and with His grace, then I can see great things. And what the problem is - is we go back and forth from seeing things the way the world sees them, and seeing them the way God sees them. But if we are going to truly be people who are not blind spiritually, we have to look at the world through the eyes of God - through the eyes of grace! Through the power of the Holy Spirit. And yesterday, we had 115 guys here - these poor guys are hearing me again! But, the reality is when you have the Spirit of God within you, then you can see things through the eyes of God - through grace. If not, then we look at the things of the world through the eyes of the world. Even the prophet in the first reading today, right? He was a prophet, he spoke for God. But he still saw things through the eyes of the world, did he not? He saw - he had the seven sons in front of him. The first one comes - the big muscular guy, a warrior, and he goes "this is the one." And God says "No, stupid, you're looking at things through the eyes of the world. I see the heart. You're looking at the external." Don't we do the same thing? We look at the external. Oh, this one is good, or this one is good. Or, we sit there and think that we have power in our physical abilities and because we're athletic. And we look at the way people look - if they're good looking, if they're bad looking, we make judgments on them - all the way they look. Whether our hair is long and going gray again because we haven't had it cut in awhile. We make things like that into how people look, instead of seeing their heart. You know, and one of the greatest ways to show that is to think about the person you can't stand. Are you thinking about that person? Do you have a good image in your mind of that person you just can't stand? For what ever reason. They hurt you. They talked about you. They gossiped about you. They said bad things. What ever it is. Are you thinking of that person? You are looking at them through the eyes of the world. Do you know the way God sees that person you can't stand? They are worthy of His love and worthy of the death of His only Son. He sees them redeemed in His eyes. He sees them loved. He sees them as if they were the only person there is. Fully loved. And you might sit there and say "I don't see it." That's the problem. You're blind. I'm blind. And so what we have to do is we have to acknowledge our blindness. We have to acknowledge our wretchedness and say "God, look at me without You. Look at the way I judge others. Look at the way I see others. Look at the way I only look at the external, and I don't see the heart." Or "look at the way I only see how they hurt me, and not see their pain." You know, when we hurt somebody, it's because we had a bad day, or because we've been

stressed, or we make excuses for when we hurt others, right? And we ok that. When someone hurts us, there is no excuse. They should have known better! How dare they? If they're stressed, I don't have to live with their stress. Isn't it amazing how we take the same eyes and we switch them? Easy on us – hard on them. We don't see their pain. We don't see how someone hurt them. We don't see where they are coming from, and dat ta dat. And so we judge them and put them in a box. We dismiss them and we are blind is what God is saying to us. So we have to ask for the grace that we start seeing others the way He sees them. And that has to begin with the people we don't like. That has to begin with the people that don't worship the way worship. That has to begin with the people who don't see things the way we see them, and say "Lord, help me to see the way you see, not the way the world sees, not the way I want to see, not the judgmentalness of their appearance, but their soul. Help me to see everything the way you see." And so - just a thought - while you and are going through our day, and we think about when we are thinking about others, or judging others, just stop and say "Lord, am I seeing them the way I am, the way the world sees them, or am I seeing them the way You are?" And ninety percent of the time, we are doing it the way we want, instead of the way God wants. So when that happens, don't go nuts. Acknowledge it, repent from it, and ask God for His sight. That we can say with the old spiritual "I was blind, but now I see." Ya Got It? Get It? Good. Six minutes and nine seconds! Whoa! That's because I have been talking for hours and hours and hours and hours for this whole last week, and I can't say any more! Just a thought. May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.