

4th Sunday of Lent, A (Scrutiny/Lætare) – March 31, 2019 – Very Rev. Bryan W. Jerabek, J.C.L.
Cathedral of St. Paul, Birmingham, Ala. – 5pm Vigil, 8:30 & 11am Sunday Masses – 400 words

An easy-to-miss detail in today’s rather lengthy gospel is the fact that the man born blind did not take the initiative to approach Jesus or otherwise ask him for healing. Christ found him, as it were, and gave him something that he had not sought. And that gift was itself an invitation: an invitation to faith. A question we should ask ourselves with regularity throughout our lives is, What things that I never asked for has God given me?

The invitation to faith that the gift of healing brought did not come at what might have been considered an ideal moment. The man, in fact, was given every opportunity to decide whether he would believe in Jesus or not – and there were some rather weighty reasons that he might have taken the gift and run, rather than stick around and believe. Whether to shield his parents or avoid the wrath of the Pharisees, not believing was easier.

“Do you believe in the Son of Man?”, Jesus asks him. “Who is he, sir, that I may believe?”, the man asks in return. Notice his fundamental openness. He does not put pre-conditions on belief, like the Pharisees. He does not fear social repercussions, like his parents. “I do believe”, he says – and then he worships. What we see at work here is not just faith but also trust. It’s as if he says, “If he could heal me, I may trust him entirely”.

Growth in trust could well be a fruit of our going back and asking ourselves that question I mentioned at the beginning. We have the gift of faith from God and that is why we are here today. But do we live that faith out with full trust – without fear or concern for human respect? Can we say also, “The Lord is my shepherd; there is *nothing* I shall want”? Seeing just how much the Lord has done for us unprompted will benefit us.

Reflecting on our Blessed Mother’s example will also help. We just celebrated her Annunciation, when she gave herself with full faith and trust to God. Today, in this Mass, we sing her praises with the season antiphon, *Ave Regina Cælorum*: “Gaude, virgo gloriosa, super omnes speciosa...” – “Rejoice, O glorious virgin, lovely beyond all others...”. May she help us see more clearly all that Christ has done for us – and trust him with all our hearts.