

Christianity is filled with the stories of people who had a conversion. St. Paul persecuted Christians before he became one. St. Augustine pursued sexual promiscuity before he became a priest and a bishop. St. Thomas Aquinas was a terrible student who ended up one of the greatest writers in Catholic history. Dorothy Day committed her share of sins before founding the Catholic Worker movement on behalf of the American poor. Conversion from evil to good so attracts us that novels, movies, and news stories succeed when they describe characters like Ebenezer Scrooge or Matthew Poncelet.

Since lent is the great season of conversion the church offers us a gospel today which commemorates the importance of change. The story is well known. Jesus takes a man blind from birth, rubs mud in his face, tells him to wash in the pool of Siloam, and miraculously the man receives sight. But the story is really about spiritual blindness. The man not only receives physical sight, he moves from the darkness of unbelief into belief in the light of Christ. The Pharisees, however, confronted with the same miracle, remain unbelievers. Jesus says they are the ones who truly are blind.

During lent our catechumens and candidates are making their final preparations for reception into our church this Easter. They are the primary symbols of lent: people who are moving from a former belief into a Catholic belief, from outside our community to inside our community, from the darkness of doubt to the light of Christ.

But lent calls each one of us to a similar conversion. This is the time for us to ask ourselves some serious questions: Where is our blindness? Is it in the way we treat our family? In our carelessness for the world's poor? Is it in our addictions to substances? In turning from the sufferings of others? If Jesus saw us today, what blindness would he want to heal? These are the questions of lent, and they call us to conversion. Jesus sent the blind man to the pool of Siloam to wash. Where would he send us to cure us of our blindness? To our family? To our church? To charity? To counseling? Where is our pool of Siloam?

In these final weeks of lent the church invites us to acknowledge our sins, our blindness, before God and to experience the healing power of Christ this Easter.