

*Session Three*  
*The Man Born Blind: Faith Grows*

*Welcome*

**Rick** (about 2:03 PM): Good afternoon and welcome to Session Three of our Family of Parishes Lenten Retreat. I am Rick Jachimiak, a parishioner here at Immaculate Conception. We are so happy to have you with us here today.

For those of you joining us for their first Lenten Retreat Sunday, welcome! One of the beautiful byproducts of the recent retreats is that we each can meet people from other parishes in the small group discussions that occur during the fellowship portion.

Today's retreat should last about 90 minutes or so. We'll spend the first part here in the church, with prayers, song, a witness talk by Deacon Marty, a reading from St. John's gospel about the man born blind, a homily by Fr. Aaron, time for personal reflection, and a lighting of candles. After we're done in the church, we will all proceed to the school cafeteria, for refreshments, and, small-group discussions to cap off today's retreat.

Restrooms are located off the vestibule of the main entrance to the church, in the back. You'll pass by others in the school hallway on the way to the cafeteria. We would appreciate it if you would silence your cell phones at this time.

Fr. Aaron will no lead us in the Gathering Prayer. You will find the responses on page 8 in your Water, Light, and Life Participant Booklet. Please stand.

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*Opening Verse*

**Fr. Aaron:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Sisters and brothers, let us pause for a moment of silence, recognizing that we are in the presence of God.

*All pause for a moment of silence*

**Fr. Aaron:** O God, come to my assistance.

**All:** Lord, make haste to help me.

**Fr. Aaron:** Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

**All:** as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

**Rick:** Please turn to page 14 in your booklet, and we'll sing verses one & four of our Retreat's Hymn ~ *Refresh, Restore, Revive*. Page 14, verses one & four.

♪ Redeeming, faithful, living God...

*Gathering Prayer*

**Fr. Aaron:** Brothers and sisters, as we gather today,  
we open our hearts to the mystery of conversion.  
Let us pray to Christ, who illumines the darkness of our hearts.

*Pause for silent prayer*

**Fr. Aaron:** Lord Jesus, like the man born blind,  
we long to see your face.  
Gathering as your family,  
we ask that you open our eyes, heal our blindness,

and help us to recognize you as our Lord,  
who live and reign with God the Father  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

**All :** Amen.

Please be seated.

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*Fr. Aaron exits the sanctuary*

*Deacon Marty approaches the sanctuary  
(Using Ambo or wireless microphone)*

**Rick:** We welcome Deacon Marty Hackford who will share with us some of his experiences.

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*Deacon Marty's witness talk* (about 2:08 PM)

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*Deacon Marty exits the sanctuary*

**Rick** (about 2:24 PM): Thank you Deacon Marty!

*Introductory Comments*

**Rick:** In our last session,  
we entered into the dialogue  
between the Samaritan woman  
and Jesus, at the well.  
We came to understand the nature of  
the “living water” that Jesus promised,  
and we explored how the woman began to have faith in Jesus.

Today, we meet and walk with the man born blind  
as he grows in faith.  
Shortly after he is given his sight,  
he merely refers to “the man called Jesus”.  
Soon after that, however, he declares Jesus a prophet.  
Finally, he declares his faith in Jesus as the in the Son of Man, as God.  
He gave his “yes” to Jesus. He said, “I do believe, Lord”;  
and he worshipped Jesus.

Lent is also a time for us to journey in faith.  
This is a time for us to come to a deeper understanding  
of our own relationship with Christ.  
Like the man born blind,  
we can come to a richer and fuller vision of who Jesus is in our lives  
and, in so doing, we are called to say, “I do believe, Lord”,  
and for us to worship Jesus.

The woman at the well, a Samaritan and a woman,  
was supposed to be beneath the notice of a Jewish man,  
yet Jesus saw her and called her to new life.  
This man born blind (also) has no status within the community;  
yet Jesus sees him in his full humanity,  
and draws him into faith.  
This blind man’s healing, by the Light of the World,  
is a declaration of God’s presence through Jesus.  
To the Pharisees, who remain deliberately blind,  
Jesus is merely a sinner, and not from God.  
But the man, who was born blind,  
now sees the truth about Jesus.  
He doesn’t just gain his sight.  
He recognizes Jesus as the “Son of Man” – God Himself.

Unlike the woman at the well  
— who was still in the process of coming to faith —  
the man born blind declares his faith fully in Jesus.

He gives his “yes” to Jesus,  
and his response to Jesus is to worship him.

As we listen to this Gospel message,  
let us consider how  
we can improve our own sight,  
how we can recognize Jesus as the “Son of Man” in our own lives,  
how we can more readily give our “yes”  
and how we can more easily respond by worshiping Him.

Now, please pull out your prayer card from the purple folder, and let’s  
pray it together.

Merciful Father, even when we wander astray,  
you call us to return to you.  
Fill our hearts with your peace and forgiveness,  
and draw us ever closer in your loving embrace.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen!

Now I invite Immaculate Conception parishioner Barb Jakubowski to  
come forward and read from chapter nine of the Gospel according to  
John.

Please stand.

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**Barb Jakubowski** (about 2:29 PM):

As Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.  
His disciples asked him,  
“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents,  
that he was born blind?”

Jesus answered,  
    “Neither he nor his parents sinned;  
    it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him.  
We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day.  
Night is coming when no one can work.  
While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”  
When he had said this, he spat on the ground  
    and made clay with the saliva,  
    and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him,  
    “Go wash in the Pool of Siloam”—which means Sent—.  
So he went and washed, and came back able to see.

His neighbors and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said,  
    “Isn’t this the one who used to sit and beg?”  
Some said, “It is,”  
    but others said, “No, he just looks like him.”  
He said, “I am.”  
So they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?”  
He replied,  
    “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes  
    and told me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’  
So I went there and washed and was able to see.”  
And they said to him, “Where is he?”  
He said, “I don’t know.”

They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees.  
Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a sabbath.  
So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see.  
He said to them,  
    “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see.”  
So some of the Pharisees said,  
    “This man is not from God,  
    because he does not keep the sabbath.”  
But others said,  
    “How can a sinful man do such signs?”

And there was a division among them.  
So they said to the blind man again,  
    “What do you have to say about him,  
    since he opened your eyes?”  
He said, “He is a prophet.”

Now the Jews did not believe  
    that he had been blind and gained his sight  
    until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained his sight.  
They asked them,  
    “Is this your son, who you say was born blind?  
How does he now see?”  
His parents answered and said,  
    “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind.  
We do not know how he sees now,  
    nor do we know who opened his eyes.  
Ask him, he is of age;  
    he can speak for himself.”  
His parents said this because they were afraid  
    of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed  
    that if anyone acknowledged him as the Christ,  
    he would be expelled from the synagogue.  
For this reason his parents said,  
    “He is of age; question him.”

So a second time they called the man who had been blind  
    and said to him, “Give God the praise!  
We know that this man is a sinner.”  
He replied,  
    “If he is a sinner, I do not know.  
One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see.”  
So they said to him,  
    “What did he do to you?  
How did he open your eyes?”

He answered them,  
“I told you already and you did not listen.  
Why do you want to hear it again?  
Do you want to become his disciples, too?”  
They ridiculed him and said,  
    “You are that man’s disciple;  
    we are disciples of Moses!  
We know that God spoke to Moses,  
    but we do not know where this one is from.”  
The man answered and said to them,  
    “This is what is so amazing,  
    that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes.  
We know that God does not listen to sinners,  
    but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him.  
It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind.  
If this man were not from God,  
    he would not be able to do anything.”  
They answered and said to him,  
    “You were born totally in sin,  
    and are you trying to teach us?”  
Then they threw him out.

When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out,  
    he found him and said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”  
He answered and said,  
    “Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?”  
Jesus said to him,  
    “You have seen him,  
    and the one speaking with you is he.”  
He said,  
    “I do believe, Lord,” and he worshiped him.  
Then Jesus said,  
    “I came into this world for judgment,  
    so that those who do not see might see,  
    and those who do see might become blind.”



Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this  
and said to him, “Surely we are not also blind, are we?”  
Jesus said to them,  
“If you were blind, you would have no sin;  
but now you are saying, ‘We see,’ so your sin remains.”

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

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***Father Aaron's homily*** (about 2:35 PM)

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**Rick** (about 2:51 PM): Thank you, Fr. Aaron.

*If running behind schedule, this section may be omitted*

Let us pause now to reflect on how what we heard today means to us personally.

*Silence (20 seconds)*

Where is the darkness in my life? *[Pause. 10 seconds.]*

What must I do to open myself to the light?

*Silence (20 seconds)*

Like for the man born blind, our faith is a journey, a constant turning to God. *[Pause. 10 seconds.]*

What must I do to walk more fully in the light?

*Silence (20 seconds)*

Christ has promised living water, Christ is the light of the world!

*[Pause. 10 seconds.]*

How will I say yes to Jesus in prayer and worship?

*Silence (20 seconds)*

### *Candle Ceremony*

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***Darya and other recruits***

*distribute fire to persons at the end of each pew*

**Rick:** Each of you should have a candle that we will use in a few moments. You are each invited to take these candles home with you today.

As the flame comes your way, I now invite you to light your candle as a reminder that Christ is our light, the light that shatters the darkness in our lives.

As we accept Christ as our Light, may we come to see Christ more clearly, and may our faith lead us to profound worship.

**Rick:** (during the lighting of the candles):

Open my eyes, Lord. Help me to see your face.

♪ Open my eyes, Lord. Help me to see (your face).

Optional      Open my ears, Lord. Help me to hear your voice.

♪ Open my ears, Lord. Help me to hear (your voice).

Optional      Open my heart, Lord. Help me love like you.

♪ Open my heart, Lord. Help me love (like you).

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

Lord, open my eyes to see your truth

Open my eyes to see your will.

Open my eyes to discern good from evil.

Open my eyes to help me to see the beauty and goodness in all things.

Open my eyes to recognize your presence in every moment.

Open my eyes, so that I can better see the path you have set before me.

Amen.

You may now extinguish your candles. Please stand.

Filled with gratitude for God’s healing presence in our lives, we dare to pray:

**All:** Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Please turn to page 14 of your participant’s booklet and join me in singing verse 6. Page 14. Verse 6.

♪ One God! We praise you...

**Fr. Aaron** (about 2:58 PM): Let us pray.

*Pause for silent prayer.*

O God,  
source of unfailing light,  
through your Son, Jesus,  
you have shown the healing power of your mighty deeds.  
Enlighten us, your chosen servants,  
so that like the man born blind we can say,  
“We were blind but now we see.”  
May our “seeing you” move us to proclaim your goodness to the world  
and lead us to worship you and confess him,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

**All:** Amen.

**Fr. Aaron:** The Lord be with you.

**All:** And with your spirit.

**Fr. Aaron:** Bow down for the blessing.

Graciously enlighten your family, O Lord, we pray,  
that by holding fast to what is pleasing to you,  
they may be worthy to accomplish all that is good.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

**Fr. Aaron:** And may the blessing of almighty God,  
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
come down on you and remain with you for ever.

**All:** Amen.

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**Rick:** This concludes the Church portion of today's retreat.

Thank you to Father Aaron, Deacon Marty, and our Lector, Barb Jakubowski for making today's retreat so special. Thanks also to the Lenten Retreat Team, all those who baked goodies, and to the Immaculate Conception Social Committee, who is ensuring that everything is running smoothly in the cafeteria, which we will all go to in a few minutes.

Our Lenten Retreat continues at 2:00 PM next Sunday, at St. Joseph Church which located at 46 North Main Steet in Holland. In addition to the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, all are invited to stay at St. Joseph for a fellowship gathering that they are preparing for us. Refreshments and treats will be available in that famous St. Joseph brand of fellowship. Then, in two weeks, the final Lenten Sunday Retreat will be held at Annunciation Church on Clinton Street in Elma. Feel free to bring a friend each Sunday. Walk-ins are always welcome, and pre-registration is not required.

We will now proceed to the school cafeteria through the exit to your right. Please take all you belongings, including the candle and your purple folder. In the cafeteria, help yourself to a beverage, then find a seat at any table. You'll find suggestions for small group discussions, and you'll find some snacks that have been prepared by our generous volunteers.

*All proceed to the cafeteria* (about 3:00 PM)