

Third Week of Lent
March 15, 2015
11:00 a.m. Homily
1 Sam 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a, Eph 5:8-14, John 9:1-41

In this week's Gospel, we hear about a man born blind, the disciples asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Now the disciples of Jesus certainly knew all about the story of David from our first reading today. And yet, despite the fact the sacred Scriptures were an important part of the disciples' lives, they took one look at the man born blind and made a snap judgment based on appearances: his blindness must have been a punishment for sin.

Now that another 20 centuries have passed, certainly *we're* wise enough to always look beneath the surface appearance of someone, just as the Lord does, before we make any kind of judgment.

Well, maybe not. Because if we are honest with ourselves, we still tend to make judgments of others based on their appearance.

We can make a strong case that right here in the 21st century—here in our high-tech, educated, enlightened, sophisticated modern society—we have become absolutely obsessed with appearances.

Just think about our most famous celebrities. Do we form our opinions of them, as the Lord does, based on their hearts—based on their faith and purity and goodness? Hardly.

All of us realize that we live in a real, concrete, physical world, but are we equally aware that we simultaneously live in a real spiritual world?

One reality we can see, hear, and feel; the other is more elusive to our comprehension. But its effects can certainly be recognized.

Most of us see well enough in the earthly realm, but in the realm of the Spirit we're practically blind.

Like Samuel it's easy for us to make spiritual judgments based on physical appearances.

This is unfortunate, because one's physical appearance, good looks, charismatic personality, and fashionable bearing can often mask a person's less attractive spiritual condition. To view people on outward appearances is a form of spiritual blindness that we should do our best to abandon.

The Lord, on the other hand, looks through people's outward shell to view the spiritual quality of their inner life. This kind of spiritual vision and insight must come from the Lord, and from having our minds *transformed* to think and to see more clearly in light of the truths and the values found in the Word of God.