

SERMON
Sunday of the Blind Man (John 9:1-38)
(17 May 2026)

Another miracle of the Lord is recounted in today's Gospel reading—a miracle with certain noteworthy characteristics on which it is worth pausing and reflecting.

As we heard, Christ encounters a man who has been blind from birth. He has compassion on him, makes clay from His saliva and earth, and gives him the command to go and wash in a spring called the Pool of Siloam. The blind man will obey the Lord's instructions to the letter and will be healed, only to later receive all the opposition of the religious establishment of the time, which was seeking an opportunity to accuse Jesus.

On the occasion of this miracle, Christ clarifies and dissolves a very widespread belief of His time—and also of our own—that the sinner is punished by God with bodily illness and, generally, with various misfortunes, while the pious and virtuous person is rewarded with health, economic prosperity, social recognition, and so on. This is the "Prosperity Gospel," preached today by various groups from the Pentecostal tradition, and it is clearly a completely anti-Gospel teaching, bordering—if not exceeding—the limits of heresy and false doctrine.

Christ categorically affirms that a person's physical disability is not due to his personal sin or the sin of his parents, but occurred so that the works of God might be revealed. The Lord does not mean that God made him blind so that he might suffer all his life and then Christ would come to heal him in order to display His power and glory. The Fathers interpret that the man's blindness in today's Gospel is due to natural causes; it is a genetic anomaly, a defect of nature, and not the result of sin. It is a consequence of the fallen condition of the human race as a whole, of the entrance of corruption and illness into our world, and not of this particular person's wrongdoing. Thus, Christ's answer means that this healing will become the occasion for the works of God to be revealed—namely, salvation and the re-creation of humanity—and not that the man was blind all his life because God caused it.

For this very reason, Christ does not heal only with His word, as He does in many other cases, but proceeds to a deeply symbolic act: He takes earth and, with His saliva, makes clay and applies it to the eyes of the blind man. He does this to show that He is the One who formed Adam from the earth and now again, from earth, performs a new creation, restoring the sick and broken nature to its former state of health and integrity. For this is what salvation means: to become whole, that is, complete and entire.

There is, however, one act that seems incomprehensible. After Christ heals the blind man with the clay, why does He tell him to wash in the Pool of Siloam? What is the meaning and necessity of this action? The wisdom of the Fathers informs us that this act symbolises Holy Baptism. The anointing with clay refers to physical healing, while the water of the spring grants the spiritual cleansing and illumination that the

human person receives through Baptism. Moreover, even the name of the pool—Siloam, which means “Sent”—points to Christ, who as the One sent by God comes to renew and save humanity.

And indeed, the blind man is a saved person. Not only were his physical eyes opened, but also the eyes of his soul. That is why, despite the rejection and bullying he suffers from the religious environment of the time, he confesses his faith in the Messiah and even worships Him, recognising His divine nature.

Let us also, my brothers and sisters, imitate the blind man and ask the Lord to open the eyes of our soul, so that we may receive our salvation.