

Fourth Sunday of Lent, Cycle A  
1 Samuel 16: 1B, 6-7, 10-13A  
Psalm 23: 1-3A, 3B-4, 5, 6  
Ephesians 5: 8-14  
John 9: 1-41  
Rev. Charles B. Gordon, C.S.C.  
The Garaventa Center  
The University of Portland

I was pushing buttons on the T.V. remote control in our Community Room, when a woman came on the screen to announce a contest. To win, you had to answer this question: "What 'rock' is a British colony in the Mediterranean Sea, south of Spain." Now that struck me as a very *easy* question. I figured thousands of people must be rushing to call the special phone number in hopes of winning the contest.

But then, because I'd been thinking about today's scripture readings, it occurred to me that sometimes even easy questions don't get answered. Even when an answer is perfectly obvious, it can be left unsaid. I'm thinking of questions like, "Which one of you kids broke the lamp?" or "Do these jeans make me look fat?" or "Sir, do you know why I pulled you over?" or "So, what do you think of the emperor's new clothes?"

Consider our Gospel. Jesus has been curing people on the Sabbath again. And once again the authorities are outraged. Miracles weren't all that unusual in Jesus' day. He wasn't the only person who went around healing people. But this time, Jesus had done something completely unprecedented -- something no one had done before: He'd given vision to a man born blind.

The man was brought before the Pharisees, who said to him:

"Since it was your eyes he opened, you should be able to tell us, who is this Jesus?" Now given the unique miracle that Jesus had just performed, that was an easy question. And the man answered it without hesitation: "He is a prophet."

But when the man's parents were brought before the Pharisees, their fear of the authorities prevented them from answering the easy question. They said: Don't ask us. We have no idea. Our son is of age. Ask him." Another easy question goes unanswered.

Lent is a season in which we stop and ask ourselves questions about Jesus: "Who is he, and what should I do about it?" If we consider what the Lord has done for us, and for those we love, if we look at the questions with the eyes of faith, the answers should be obvious. But will we choose to answer?

I remember having a long talk with a man who said he wasn't sure whether Christianity was true. In the course of our conversation he told me that over the years he had made regular contributions to an order of cloistered nuns, and that whenever he asked them to pray for him, their prayers had been answered. He had received whatever he asked them to pray for. Now I would have thought that this experience would have made the answer to his questions about Christianity pretty obvious, but apparently something else was holding him back.

What's holding us back? What's blinding us to Christ? Is it self-deception? Fear of being mocked by the cultured despisers of religion? Misguided self-interest? The inconvenience of the Cross? In the face of all these things Christ asks us, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" Let our lives be our answer.