

“And he worshiped Him.” These four words from today’s Gospel can be easily overlooked with everything else that goes on in this long reading. These four words, though, are the very climax of the Gospel. They show that not only did Jesus heal the blind man of his physical blindness, but also of his spiritual blindness. And the man who had been born blind responded to this healing in the best way possible. He worshiped Jesus.

He didn’t just say “Thank you” and go on with his life. And he didn’t simply decide that since Jesus had done something nice for him, he would do something nice for someone else; a kind of “pay it forward” response. Now, don’t get me wrong, it’s obviously a good thing to show our gratitude and to extend care and kindness to others. The greatest response, and the most important, though, is to worship the Lord. Not just some outward showing that we do half-heartedly or without thinking about it, but true worship, with the entirety of our heart and our will.

Before we can get to the point of offering true worship, however, we first must know who it is we are worshiping. We must know God, intimately and personally. For how can we truly worship someone that we don’t know? We can’t. So, we, must think about, reflect upon and contemplate who Jesus really is. And as we continue to do this, over time, the true person of Jesus will be revealed to us, just as He was revealed to the man born blind. For the blind man went from experiencing Jesus as the man who healed him, to a prophet, to a man from God, and finally, to Lord.

So, how can we, in this day and age, come to truly see Jesus for who He really is? Well, it’s not always easy for us. We constantly face distractions offered us by the world; we allow our own sins to darken our hearts and minds; we become too focused on material needs and desires to give time to our spiritual needs. All of this makes it very difficult at times to come to know Jesus. So what can be done?

As I thought about this question, I came across something that seems to be an excellent answer. I was reading about our late Holy Father, John Paul the Second. In fact, today (yesterday) is the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of this holy man. And in four weeks, this great pontiff will be beatified on Divine Mercy Sunday. John Paul II was definitely someone who was aware of the need to truly know Jesus. And one of the ways he encouraged others to do this was by simply praying the Rosary.

Pope John Paul II knew the power and the beauty of the Rosary. And he wanted others to experience this for themselves. Because the Rosary is far more than just saying some Our Fathers and Hail Marys. As he put it, “To recite the Rosary is nothing other than to contemplate, with Mary, the face of Christ.”

“To contemplate the face of Christ.” To look intently at Jesus, to stare into His eyes, to gaze on Him, who is the light of the world. This is what we all need. This is a very powerful, and relatively simple, way to come to know Jesus.

Now, the man born blind in today’s Gospel obviously never prayed the Rosary. But he was able to contemplate the face of Christ. Following the healing of his physical blindness, this man was able to come back to Jesus and look at the man who had healed him. Slowly, though, the man began to see Jesus with the eyes of faith. The light of Christ began to penetrate this man’s soul and shine in his heart.

And this is exactly what spending time in prayer, especially with time-tested prayers like the Rosary, can do for us. We meditate on the person of Jesus and the events of His life. We take time to look at the man who has healed us. We take time to look at Him who still today wants to heal us. We allow Him to shine His light in our hearts and so scatter the darkness of sin and evil that is present there. And slowly, we come to recognize who Jesus really is. We come to know God. Along with the man born blind, we say, “I do believe, Lord.” And finally, with all our heart and all our will, we worship Him.