

## Homily for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent

Pierre-Paul Thomas of Montreal was born with nystagmus (niss-TAG-miss), a condition that causes the eyes to rapidly move back and forth involuntarily. As a child, he had multiple surgeries, but nothing restored his vision, which was limited to shadows of black and gray – nothing else. He had resigned himself to the fact that he would never see beyond the darkness. He learned to use his hands and, relying only on his sense of touch, he became a mechanic.

Three years ago, Pierre-Paul fell down the stairway of his apartment building, and fractured several thin bones around his eye sockets. When the surgeons examined him, they discovered that his blindness was curable. They told him that it was the cataracts and not the disease that was causing his blindness. Before they began surgery to heal his injury, they asked him, “While we’re at it, do you want us to fix your eyes, too?” – an offer

he quickly accepted

When he woke up from surgery, he opened his eyes to his sister, standing over him. For the first time in 66 years, he could see her. She could hardly believe it when he said “you’re beautiful.” He later said: “I find everything beautiful. Faces, skin — I find it all beautiful. I feel like a child in a beautiful world. My God, I am so happy to see people, to come out of the shadows. It’s a miracle.”

Pierre-Paul Thomas, like the man born blind in the Gospel, gained more than just vision; to say that he could see colors and people and the world is one thing, but to say it’s “beautiful” ... to say “it’s a miracle” ... that’s more than sight: that’s insight!

And that’s the gift Jesus came to bring to the world, whether you could see or not, he came with the gift of insight – because life is more than what meets the eye. Insight leads us past outward appearances. Like the prophet Samuel in today’s first reading, learning to see is much more than learning to look. It is learning to

see what God sees.

We live in a dark world. Far or near, within ourselves or beyond, there is an endless cascade of frightening realities. Like the blind man in today's Gospel we need to cling to Christ who is the light that will not be overcome by darkness. Like Pierre-Paul we need to see that the world is not just images but filled with the beauty of God's love made real in each other and in our own lives.