

**Homily for March 30, 2003 (2nd Scrutiny)
4th Sunday of Lent Cycle A**

By Father Charles Bowes

**1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7,10-13a, 31
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41**

Only gradually do we come to see God at work in our lives.

In this wonderful story, Saint John's Gospel chapter 9, the man born blind receives his sight instantaneously but only gradually does he come to recognize who Jesus is – the sight or insight of his heart grows by degrees over time. First he refers to Jesus as “a man” who healed him. Then he refers to him as “a prophet.” And only at the final scene is he able to call Jesus “Lord.”

It's that way with us too. Sure, we may have been born into the faith or come through a process into full communion as an adult, but the light of faith, the deepening experience of God comes only gradually over time. And this deepening insight into God and the things of God, this perception of reality as God-laden, requires effort, openness, a willingness on our part.

The other day at a Mass for our children in the school, I had the children hold their arms in a folded position like this – and I talked about how hard it was to receive anything or pick up anything because our arms were all folded up. What was necessary, of course,

was that we had to open our hands like this – and in that way we can receive other people as well as God. In fact, we can even receive Holy Communion – a sacrament we can't possibly receive unless we open our hands or our mouths.

It's the same way in drawing closer to God – the penances we do during Lent of prayer, fasting, works of kindness – all these have as their sole purpose to make us open, available to the invasion of God.

A week from this coming Monday we will have our parish reconciliation service at 7:00 in the evening – an opportunity to name and to claim our unloving choices and our struggles – an opportunity to be open with God so that we might receive what God already wishes to give.

If there's one thing this war with Iraq might teach us, it's that we are so totally dependent upon God for everything and our best efforts to manage life will always fall short and be inadequate and incomplete. We so desperately need God to complete our lives, and to make us and our world whole. For this reason we inscribe the names of our active duty military in our book at the shrine of Mary – our prayer for peace with a human face. And likewise we pray and plan for our parish Convocation on May 22 for two hours on a

Thursday evening – a time to prioritize the challenges that face our parish. As we move closer to the end of Lent and to the great Easter feast, may our prayer be for that openness that allows us to see more clearly the presence of God always and everywhere.

Only gradually do we come to see
God at work in our lives.