

BSP#5 Group Time Questions

- (a) The question the disciples ask Jesus in 9:2 is based upon a presupposition. What is the assumption behind the question? (You can answer this in 1 sentence.)
 - (b) Is this a reasonable presupposition? (Read Isaiah 53:3-6, Ezekiel 18:1-4.)
 - (c) Are you guilty of making the same mistake? (Be honest.)
- Return to John 8:12-13. What theme from these verses is repeated in John 9:5? What is the significance of Jesus' actually giving a man physical sight, especially through the means of rubbing clay on his eyes? (Reflect on CCC 1151 below.) Does the use of visible signs and images constitute a form of idolatry? (Read CCC 1159 below.)

1151 *Signs taken up by Christ.* In his preaching the Lord Jesus often makes use of the signs of creation to make known the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. He performs healings and illustrates his preaching with physical signs or symbolic gestures. He gives new meaning to the deeds and signs of the Old Covenant, above all to the Exodus and the Passover, for he himself is the meaning of all these signs.

1159 The sacred image, the liturgical icon, principally represents *Christ*. It cannot represent the invisible and incomprehensible God, but the incarnation of the Son of God has ushered in a new "economy" of images:

Previously God, who has neither a body nor a face, absolutely could not be represented by an image. But now that he has made himself visible in the flesh and has lived with men, I can make an image of what I have seen of God . . . and contemplate the glory of the Lord, his face unveiled.

- (a) Read John 10:1. What is the Sheepfold? (See CCC 553 below.)

553 Jesus entrusted a specific authority to Peter: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The "power of the keys" designates authority to govern the house of God, which is the Church. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, confirmed this mandate after his Resurrection: "Feed my sheep." The power to "bind and loose" connotes the authority to absolve sins, to pronounce doctrinal judgments, and to make disciplinary decisions in the Church. Jesus entrusted this authority to the Church through the ministry of the apostles and in particular through the ministry of Peter, the only one to whom he specifically entrusted the keys of the kingdom.

 - (b) Read John 10:2-3. Who is the shepherd of the sheep? Who is the gatekeeper and who are the sheep?
 - (c) In John 10:8, Jesus says He is the door. Who are those He calls thieves and robbers who came before Him?
 - (d) In John 10:16, Jesus states He has "other sheep, not of this fold". Who are these other sheep?
- Because of a fear of the Jews and a fear of being cast out of the synagogue, the parents of the blind man would not come to his defense when questioned by the Pharisees. Belief in Jesus Christ often causes divisions in families. Has there ever been a time in your life that your belief in Jesus has caused a division in your family? Do you ever let fear of this division keep you from truly professing Jesus as your savior? How do you usually deal with these situations?

BSP#5 Answers for Group Time Questions

1. (a) The assumption is that the suffering is God's punishment caused by sins committed by either the victim himself or somebody related to him.

(b) No, otherwise Jesus' excruciating suffering on the Cross would be the result of His sins. Ezekiel also makes it very clear that this assumption is wrong. As a result, we should be careful not to judge somebody's suffering or misfortune based on this erroneous presupposition.
2. The theme repeated in here from John 8:12-13 is "light" – Jesus is the light of the world. By healing the blind man, Jesus gives him light and demonstrates once again He is "the light that shines in the darkness." (John 1:5)
3. (a) The Church instituted by Christ, which is one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic.

(b) Jesus is the Good Shepherd. The authority (the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the power to bind and lose) and duties (feed and keep my sheep) of the Good Shepherd have been given to Peter and his successors. The clergy (bishops, priests, deacons) is entrusted with the responsibilities of the gatekeeper. The sheep = the Church faithful.

(c) The religious leaders of the Jews, who failed to look after the spiritual welfare of God's chosen people. See Ezekiel 34.

(d) The gentiles (see John 17:20), many of whom eventually were converted by the apostles. It can also mean non-Johannine Christian communities. (Ref: NJBC 61:138). We still have many "other sheep not of this fold" today, which is why we need to evangelize.

BSP#5 Overhead Notes

For if punishment were obviously inflicted on every wrongdoing in this life, it would be supposed that nothing was reserved for the last judgement; on the other hand, if God's power never openly punished any sin in this world, there would be an end to belief in providence.

- St. Augustine, City of God, I.8