

'Mirror' of Lent urges us to see more clearly

Father David J. Faraone
Guest contributor

This season of radical change called Lent is much like a mirror. Some days it reflects an image of me as I really am — a child of our living God. Other times, Lent's mirror allows me to see myself as if I were gazing into a mirror at an amusement park. My image is distorted, awkward, funny. And Lent's mirror opens my eyes to the light I am called to recognize, celebrate and become.

The Scriptures for this Fourth Sunday of Lent speak about a blindness that is destructive; not the kind of blindness

experienced by Helen Keller or Stevie Wonder or the Man in the Gospel, for the darkness of their eyes has transformed them into visionaries who can see things that many will never see.

No, the destructive blindness the church portrays for us this weekend is found in people who really cannot see but are convinced that they can.

Mohammed Salameh, allegedly tied to the Feb. 26 bombing of New York City's World Trade Center, is a follower of the blind Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman. According to the Associated Press, Abdel-Rahman has been living in the United States for three years, and his

message includes "calls to eradicate anyone who stands in the way of Islam. He is fond of issuing 'fatwas,' religious edicts that call for the murder of infidels."

What a contrast between this blind Islamic preacher and the young, blind Jewish man in John's Gospel. The man in the Gospel is very aware of his blindness and craves the light only Jesus can give.

If the Scripture readings during Lent can mirror our self-image as individuals and our self-image as a faith community, then we must decide to more radically follow Jesus Christ. The ashes placed on our foreheads at this season's start must yield to the mud made by Jesus

that is smeared on our eyes. Then we will be able to see. The sins that we commit personally and communally must yield to the loving service and tender care of our brothers and sisters in need. The blindness of prejudice, racism, judgmentalism and materialism must yield to the vision of love as articulated by the cross. The darkness of oppression must yield to the light of new life in Christ.

May we remove the cataracts distorting our vision, abandon the old blindness we cling to and wipe clean the sin-streaked windows of our souls. It is time to "hasten toward Easter with the eagerness of faith and love!" (Opening Prayer).

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