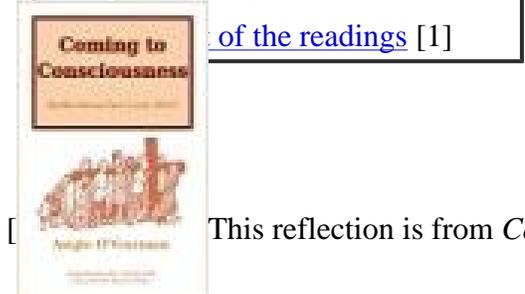


Fourth Sunday of Lent

Angie O’Gorman | Mar. 31, 2011

In the long reading from John, we again hear the first century Jewish understanding of physical ailments as an outward sign of sin. Imagine the blind man’s hopelessness at not only being born blind, but, as a consequence, being thought of as a sinner and excluded from his community. Thus, Jesus’ response to the question of whose sin caused the man’s blindness is one of great hope. It wasn’t sin, Jesus says, “but that the works of God might be made manifest in him” (John 9:3). What a different psychological and physical stance we could take toward sin in ourselves and others if we understood such weakness as a potential for making God manifest. For one thing, despair over our own powerlessness might diminish. But our tendencies to condemn others -- either individual or national “others” -- for what we perceive as their sin might be tempered by the realization that God is at work here too and will be made manifest. We have seen this. Even in the most heart-rending suffering, something seemingly internal to the human spirit arises and will not be denied. The manifestation does not negate the suffering but emerges from it, transforming a meaningless hell into restored life.



[of the readings](#) [1]

This reflection is from *Coming to Consciousness: Reflections for Lent 2011* by Angie O’Gorman

and is based on the lectionary readings for each day of Lent. *Coming to Consciousness* is a publication of Pax Christi USA and is reprinted here by permission of the author and Pax Christi USA.

The full booklet has reflections for every day of Lent. You can order copies here: [Coming to Consciousness: Reflections for Lent 2011](#) [2]. Bulk discounts are available.]

About the Author

Angie O’Gorman’s essays have been published in *America* magazine, *National Catholic Reporter*, and *Commonweal*. She has been involved in human rights work and nonviolent conflict resolution in the United States, Central America, and the West Bank. Her novel, [The Book of Sins](#) [3], was published last January.

About Pax Christi USA

In a world that settles differences by armed violence and defines “justice” as “revenge,” [Pax Christi USA](#) [4] dares to break the cycle of violence by fostering reconciliation. Pax Christi USA is the national Catholic peace movement. Our membership includes more than 130 U.S. bishops, 800 parish sponsors, 650 religious communities, 75 high school and college campus groups, 300 local groups, and tens of thousands of individual members. The work of Pax Christi USA begins in personal life and extends to communities of reflection and

action to transform structures of society. Pax Christi USA rejects war and every form of violence and domination.

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[1] <http://www.usccb.org/nab/040311.shtml>

[2] http://paxchristiusa.3dcartstores.com/Coming-to-Consciousness-Reflections-for-Lent-2011_p_219.html

[3] <https://www.ncronline.org/thebookofsins.wordpress.com>

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