



# God Guides Us

## Sin Blinds!

This is the eighth in a series on how God guides us. It is crucial to know that sin, in whatever form, blurs our ability to “see” both in the natural order as well as the spiritual. We inherit the effects of Original Sin, causing our vision of spiritual realities to become darkened, which compromises our ability to perceive with clarity God’s ways and His plan for us.

Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” Being “pure in heart” means seeing with clarity. The lack of clarity caused by sin leads to selfishness and involves our turning inward, which decreases our openness to see and hear God. We can’t “free ourselves” from sin but **Jesus** has obtained this power for us through His death and Resurrection. We receive this grace of freedom initially through Baptism. Jesus spoke with Nicodemus about this Sacrament and its importance for providing the gift of faith, with the corresponding spiritual eyes to see: “Truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” (John 3:3) Faith opens our eyes to God and the spiritual realm, and seeing with new eyes, we recognize His unconditional love for us and His plan that will bring us into His very Presence.

We will always be dealing with some areas of sinfulness until we get to Heaven. That is why Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation, for us to receive the

“washing away” of sin and its consequent “blindness” in an ongoing way. The mental picture of taking a shower can be helpful here. Who would say, “I took a shower today and so I don’t need another one for 365 days, or even several months.” The result would be disastrous! This is why we want to frequent the “spiritual cleansing” available through Confession.

The life of Blessed Matt Talbot portrays the spiritual principle that sin blinds. Matt lived in Ireland and had a first-grade education. At 13 he became a messenger for wine merchants and within a year was an alcoholic. Then, working in a timber yard, he would get paid, go to one of the pubs and give it to the owner, spending the money on alcohol until it was exhausted.

The moment of grace came when he was 28. Matt was in one of the pubs with his “friends.” His money exhausted, his body craving alcohol, he begged his companions for money but all refused. He went home to his mother and told her he was going to “take the pledge” to not drink. Matt took it for six months, then for a year and then the rest of his life. From that day he never drank again.

It was a bitter struggle for him because he was deeply dependent on alcohol. He began to see, he who had never taken his faith or prayer seriously, that he was too weak to be near pubs, but needed to be where he could gain strength. So, before work each morning he spent time

with Jesus in church, and after work, he would return for evening vespers. In those early months, he would kneel and repeatedly pray: “Lord, in Your mercy, give me the gift of prayer.” Slowly, prayer became easier and he began to be transformed.

Matt also began to see that in order to deny his body alcohol, he could not indulge his body in other ways. He began a strict regime of simple meals and sleeping on the floor. As a result, he became a pleasant and honest worker who would help anyone in need with his simple salary. With only a first-grade education, he began reading the Scriptures and the lives of the Saints. One day, at lunch, a companion saw Matt reading John Henry Newman’s “Apologia Pro Vita Sua” and said, “Isn’t that difficult?” Matt smiled, “The Lord helps me.” This was a man who built his spiritual life on seeking healing and cleansing from the sin that had bound him. This brought him ever greater clarity not only in spiritual understanding and realities, but in natural matters as well, and this eventually made him a saint. Matt Talbot is a great example of how **we** can overcome spiritual blindness through God’s grace of perseverance, resulting in the ability to **see** Him and His good plan for our lives ever more clearly!

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