**4th Sunday in Lent**

Cycle A, 3.22.20
1 Samuel 16:1,6-7, 10-13/
Ephesians 5:8-14/John 9:1-41

**ONCE IN DARKNESS, BUT NOW IN GOD’S LIGHT**

Hello Everyone,

Since I am going to say mass for my Mom here in her home tomorrow in southern CA, I thought I better have a few homiletic thoughts prepared. For most people there is no option for mass this weekend, so I thought I would share them with you. Hope you are all staying safe and well and loving...

Many of us are blessed to have fairly good sight. We are not blind, or our sight is not seriously impaired. But we still may not be able to see. Like most people, as I have aged, my eyes have lost their elasticity and I require longer arms to be able to read what once I could read up close. In the light of the mid-day sun, I can still read most things like I used to be able to read them, but the dimmer the light, the more I need reading glasses.

And sometimes, though we think we are seeing clearly, we may be lacking focus or be too narrowly focused. Sometimes the question is not what we can see, but the things to which we are giving our attention. If we are focused on a television show, a sports program, a video game, a text, twitter or Instagram message we may miss seeing many of the things going on all around us. We may miss a beautiful sunset or flower or an act of kindness or something humorous because we were not paying attention to things happening around us, our attention otherwise narrowly focused. We are distracted, perhaps from important things.

Sometimes we do not see because we are unable. Sometimes we do not see because environmental factors like fog or lack of light make visibility difficult. Sometimes we do not see because we have blind spots. Sometimes we do not see because we refuse to see what is right in front of us.

Perhaps any one of Jesse’s seven elder sons could have made a good king, but from God’s perspective David is the one who had the heart for it. His heart was not perfect since we know that he fell into murder and adultery, but God saw within him what was not apparent to the casual observer. God looked into his heart and saw what a shepherd king this shepherd boy could become, despite his flaws and weaknesses. As disciples of Jesus we are called to move beyond appearances and speak to and from the heart.

Surely the man born blind must have at times been discouraged. From his birth people blamed him or his parents for his blindness as some kind punishment for someone’s sin. These same self-righteous people refuse to celebrate the sight the
formerly blind man receives. They truly stumbled in darkness because they think they know and see when they really do not. We need to be careful whenever we think we know or see because there may well be something we’ve missed.

The man born blind is given both his physical sight and also spiritual insight. His understanding of who Jesus is develops as he is interrogated as he first professes Jesus as a man, then as a prophet, then as one from God who does God's will and finally confesses to believing Jesus is the Son of Man and worshiping him.

Lent offers us the opportunity to grow in our spiritual insight and in our relationship with Jesus. What insight into who Jesus is have we picked up this Lent? Have we grown closer to Jesus? Do we know Jesus any better? Does Jesus know us any better? We all have blind spots. Will we acknowledge them and allow Jesus to restore our vision? No one is as blind as the person who refuses to see. A human flaw discovered is half healed, for we have received an insight that at least partially frees us of our blindness.

As Christians we are light in Christ Jesus and are called to live as children of the light. We need to look beyond appearances and to try to see more as God sees and less from a human perspective. In Christ's light, we come to see as Jesus sees, seeing each other and ourselves as we truly are, more than just observing external appearances, we come to love and to accept ourselves and each other for the people we are: with gifts and with some limitations.

This Lent is an opportunity in an extraordinary way to ask God to help us truly see. With all the precautions mandated to help slow the spread of COVID-19 many of us are unexpectedly enjoying a “staycation.” With schools closed, masses cancelled, public gatherings of over 10 people forbidden, no certain end date in sight and so many plans upended, what are we seeing? What has our attention? This terrible situation can also be a wonderful opportunity, depending upon what we see and do.

So, let us ask God to open our hearts and our eyes so that the fire of the Holy Spirit may shine forth from within us. Let us act as the light of the world so that the works of God may be made visible through us. Let us try to see with God's eyes and love with Jesus' heart, remembering that any light and love we might throw into this world’s darkness will never be entirely lost or wasted. Your light may be just enough for another person to be able to see. May God be blessed.

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