

Who Do We Blame?

4th Sunday of Lent (Year A)

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Fr. Tony Davis

Anytime something goes wrong, our first reaction is to ask ourselves, ‘who can I blame?’ The focus hardly ever is on ourselves and on what we can do to help the situation. Blaming feels like we are solving a problem, but in reality, we are just creating new ones. We are jumping to conclusions, projecting our own unmet needs onto others, and ignoring the deeper mysteries of life. In short, blaming does not work. It merely perpetuates a never-ending cycle.

In today’s Gospel, upon seeing the man born blind, Jesus’ disciples immediately asked, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Like us, the disciples wanted someone to blame to give them peace of mind. Surely someone was at fault! Later on in the Gospel, the Pharisees wanted to blame Jesus by labeling him a sinner. On top of that, they also wanted to blame Jesus for healing on the Sabbath, a day of no work. As we can see, blaming is all over the place in this Gospel. It truly is a never-ending cycle!

Jesus, in his divine wisdom, ends the cycle of blame. In response to his disciples’ question, he boldly answered, “neither he nor his parents sinned.” In other words, that is a bad question. It has a false premise, namely that someone is guilty of causing his blindness. In response, Jesus took the conversation in a totally different direction. Instead of looking backward for a cause, he looked ahead for a resolution. He concluded that the man was born blind “so that the works of God might be made visible through him.”

Evil, disability, and suffering are not necessarily the direct result of someone’s fault. It is what it is. For Jesus, these situations are not so much for blame as for opportunity. They are opportunities for creating a better future and

making the works of God visible: overcoming evil with good, graciously accommodating to someone's disability, and easing the suffering of others.

When facing unfortunate situations, we should avoid asking who is to blame since blame is a never-ending cycle.

True blindness is not a physical disability, but it is being stuck in the cycle of blame and not even realizing it. For reflection, let us ask ourselves the same question the Pharisees asked Jesus, "surely we are not also blind, are we?"