

When we are knocked out of our routine, it can cause us to see things differently. That doesn't have to be a bad thing. Both our gospel and our first reading deal with sight. In the gospel we are presented with a man who lacks sight, and in our first reading we hear that "Not as man sees does God see." Greek drama is a different context, but I think it is telling that, in Greek drama, the prophet Tiresias was physically blind. Though blind, as a prophet he could see what others could not see. It seems to me it was the ancient Greeks way of saying, "Not as God sees does man see."

The reading from Samuel goes on to say, "Because man sees the appearance, but the Lord looks into the heart." So much of our life is taken up with appearances and even distractions: How was this celebrity dressed? How was the passerby dressed? How was the room decorated? Or in the case of distractions: so many things are vying for our attention – on the television, the radio, the signs on the street, the big game – and with all of the noise, we aren't able to hear the things of the heart, our own heart. Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely, the Lord's anointed in before me." Appearances. Back to Tiresias. He was blind. There were many things, distractions if you will, that others saw that he could not see. But the irony is that Tiresias saw so much more. The same irony is at play in today's gospel. The Pharisees are the teachers of the law; they are the ones that ought to see the Christ, the fulfillment of the law if anyone is going to see it. Yet, in the gospel, it the man born blind, the man who could not see, who hears the words, "You have seen him. The one speaking with you is he."

This is a very odd time – with public Masses being cancelled, with sporting events being cancelled, and various other small changes. But it can be a time of opportunity. A time to see things differently.

One way to think about seeing differently is to consider what is of 1st priority and what is of 2nd priority. A quick example: yesterday I had the joy of celebrating a wedding. Obviously, there were many fewer people than the original guest list. Any reception would be a small gathering, not a large gathering. Certainly, there was disappointment. But also a chance to see again, “What is most important about the wedding day?” The cake? The music? The size or venue? No. The most important thing about your wedding day is that you are married! And so it was. They are now husband and wife.

I have to be honest with you. So far I have not fully realized this opportunity to see differently. I still have time – hopefully, a few weeks, not a few months. Time for me to decide, in place of evening meetings and other events that have been cancelled, what is most important? Perhaps, under the current circumstances and precautions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, you have had to give up something you thought you couldn't do without. It's a Lent like no other. What might you see differently during this time? What might God be inviting you to see differently?

Was there a time in your life when you began to see things differently?

(For me, in college I was less of a loner, and more invested in friendships.)