

4th Sunday of Lent, 19 March 2023

Scriptures: 1Sam16:1,6-7,10-13; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41

Homily: Fr. Ken

After listening to the Gospel story, one could imagine how excited the blind man must have been to see for the very first time. He had an extraordinarily dramatic life-changing experience through this miracle. No longer would he need to beg to survive. He readily shared his new life of independence, and he acknowledged in gratitude the healing power of Jesus.

The blind man progresses from darkness to light: he regards Jesus as a prophet, and finally believes that Jesus is the true Son of God. The Pharisees, on the other hand, first appear to accept the blind man's healing but then begin to doubt and finally deny Jesus' heavenly origins. They end up refusing to see, rendering themselves spiritually blind.

The story of the blind man's healing takes exactly two scriptural verses; the controversy surrounding the cure, thirty-nine verses. There is an analogy and a distinction between physical and spiritual blindness, as there are with most of the Gospel miracle stories where Jesus heals blind people. The early Christians saw physical blindness as a metaphor for the spiritual blindness that prevents people from recognizing the divinity of Jesus and following his teachings. The story in this Gospel testifies to the power of Jesus to heal not just the blindness of the eye but, above all, the blindness of the heart.

The Gospel shows us that the one thing we need to qualify to bear witness to Jesus is experience of the person of Jesus Christ. That is regardless of such situations as status, education, or wealth.

And, God's divine intervention can happen during the darkest moments of any of our lives.

At this mid-point in Lent, we are invited and strongly encouraged to reflect on God's love and compassion for the whole world, and to be joyful because of it. God loves each and every one of us, and we are invited to say yes to God's love, to believe in the holiness of Jesus and to recognize God's presence in our daily lives. By doing so, we will be able to say, "I was blind but now I see".

We are also called to have the humility to recognize that God works through other people too, sometimes through the most unexpected individuals. How often do we refuse to believe that we can learn from those who oppose us and disagree with us? Do we make the effort to engage with people outside our immediate family and friends? And what areas of the Church, of society, and of our culture need serious healing in our own time? Where are the blind spots to addressing hardship and disability in our society? How is blindness to the common good being addressed?

We can ask ourselves further: Where can we recognize the light of Christ shining in the world today and in our local community?

Let each of us celebrate God's love and healing power just as the blind man did after encountering Jesus.

God's divine intervention helps all of us transform into people who live lives of goodness, generosity, justice, and peace, truly reflecting God's light and God's love.

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