

HOMILY for 4th SUNDAY of LENT – Year A

This Sunday's Gospel tells us how Jesus healed a blind beggar. Reflecting on that story, I'm reminded of this cute story that I'd like to share with you.

Nancy, still woozy from surgery, heard Dr. Williams as he leaned over her in the hospital bed. "We've operated on your eyes successfully & were able to save one of them," he announced.

"Oh, thank you," murmured Nancy. "That's wonderful."

"Yes," Dr. Williams replied. "We'll give it to you on your way out."

Anyway, last Sunday Jesus invited us to the spiritual well of the Sacraments to get the refreshing & nourishing water for the journey of the Cross with Him this Lent & eventually for the trip of Heaven. Without water, our physical body would dry up & die. Likewise, without spiritual nourishment, our spirit & soul would wither & eventually die. That is why lately we have heard a lot about mental health problems & the need for spiritual nourishment if we would like to have a joyful spirit & a peaceful soul. This Sunday's Gospel tells us how Jesus healed a blind beggar & restored his sight. Here is how the story of Jesus' miraculous healing was reported: "As Jesus walked along, He saw a man who had been blind from birth... He spat on the ground, made mud with His saliva, & smeared the man's eyes with the mud. Then, He told him, 'Go, & wash in the pool of Siloam.' So, the man went off & washed, & came back able to see."

If water & spiritual nourishment is vital to the survival of our body & the livelihood of our spirit/soul, clear sight & good vision is important to our quality way of life & the sound decisions of our future. I don't know if you have ever wondered why clear sight & good vision should be another focus for our journey of the Cross & our trip to Heaven. Once I had a chance to ask the children if they were allowed to ask Jesus to heal something, what would there be? Would they want Him to heal their blindness, deafness, muteness, crippling, or leprosy? Most of the children told me that blindness would pose a bigger problem than any physical or mental issues. In fact, they told me that they find it a huge difficulty if they would lose their sight. They would not be able to enjoy God's beautiful Creation with the colorful rainbow & all kinds of spectacular things. Meanwhile, without a good sight, they would run into things & hurt themselves & other people around them every day. Spiritually speaking, a blind person would make wrong decisions & pick bad choices. That is why we have seen a painful & violent world right now due to its many wrong decisions & bad choices. If everyone could see the importance of clear sight & good vision, I think we would have a much more compassionate & peaceful world. That is why the Church wants to remind us about Jesus' miracle of restoring sight to the blind beggar in this Lenten Gospel. Clear spiritual sight will help all of us understand why Jesus would have to suffer & die for us on the Cross. Good vision will let us see where we should head to & know what we need to do on our spiritual journey.

This Sunday's Gospel discusses at great length on the root cause of one's blindness. In case you don't know yet, the people back then believed that all the illnesses are the manifestation of the internal spiritual problems, typically one's sins. That is why Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, was it his [the blind beggar's] sin or his parents' that caused him to be born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither. It was no sin, either of this man or of his parents. Rather, it was to let God's work show forth in him... While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

In other words, Jesus wants the world to know that all the physical illnesses are not rooted in one's sinfulness like the Jewish tradition might want everyone to believe. However, Jesus seemed to allude to spiritual blindness as He said, "...I am the light of the world," i.e. "I am the spiritual guide & the savior of the world."

When someone sins, the person would suffer from spiritual blindness & tend to make bad choices & wrong decisions. That is what has happened in our world every day, especially to people in leadership positions. When we have sinful leaders, they would often pick bad choices & make wrong decisions. It is not only them who would suffer from those mistakes. But, the whole community/the public would also have to pay a dear price for the sins of those leaders. That is why we need to pray for & support virtuous leaders in the Church as well as in the world. Otherwise, the whole community/the public would be blind like its leaders & end up paying horrible price for its leader's spiritual blindness. In fact, today's First Reading gives us a great example on how we should pick a virtuous leader as following: "The Lord said to Samuel: 'I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen my King from among his sons... Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. Not as human sees does God see; because human seen the appearance, but the Lord looks into the heart.'" So, whether we pick a virtuous leader/friend/spouse, we should follow the example of the Lord & look into one's heart & virtuous way of life. Other physical & political qualities would surely bring us a blind leader/friend/spouse in the end.

My dear brothers & sisters, spiritual blindness has wreaked havoc in the Church as well as in the world throughout our human history. It has caused people to pick bad choices & make wrong decisions. As we are half way through the journey of the Cross this Lent, we should commit ourselves to complete it with Jesus & come to celebrate His death & resurrection. Otherwise, we would make Jesus walk the remaining journey of the Cross all by Himself. This Lenten season, we have looked into Jesus' heart & virtuous way of life & realized that He is the real & trustworthy leader. For He has healed the Samaritan at the well last Sunday & the blind beggar this Sunday and given them both a new life. He is indeed the light that will show us the way in this world & eventually lead us to the Gate of Heaven.