

Fourth Sunday of Lent

A blind man is walking down the street with his guide dog one day. They come to a busy intersection and the dog, ignoring the high volume of traffic zooming by on the street, leads the blind man right out into the thick of the traffic. This is followed by the screech of tires as panicked drivers try desperately not to run the pair down. Horns blaring around them, the blind man and the dog finally reach the safety of the sidewalk on the other side of the street, and the blind man pulls a cookie out of his coat pocket, which he offers to the dog. A passerby, having observed the near fatal incident, can't control his amazement and says to the blind man, "Why on earth are you rewarding your dog with a cookie? He nearly got you killed!" The blind man turns partially in his direction and replies, "To find out where his head is, so I can kick his rear end!"

Dear Friends,

We are remembering the fourth Sunday of Lent. It is called the "Laetare (Rejoice Sunday) Sunday" expressing the Church's joy in anticipation of the Resurrection of our Lord.

The readings today unfold our spiritual blindness, which brings more faith and trust into the Lord. It continues to help us to be a good disciple and make more disciples.

The first reading from the book of Samuel explains how God looks at our heart. As humans, we try to look at the appearance first and try to understand everything from there. Rather God looks at our hearts. David was anointed as a surprise for people. God chose the right one. Another interesting thing to learn is that anointing of the young David is part of the biblical motif of God's choice of the younger over the elder beginning with the choice of Abel over Cain and Jacob over Esau. God found in David "A man after his own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14).

St. Paul in the second reading, which encourages us to live as children of light, which produces every kind of goodness, righteousness and truth. Also, dispels the darkness. Let us try to live as children of light and expel the darkness by carrying Christ in us as light.

The Gospel brings out the message of the blind man's healing to reveal the mighty works of God made visible through him. The Gospel teaches us the necessity of opening the eyes of the mind by Faith. It also warns us that those who assume they see the truth are often blind, while those who acknowledge their blindness are given clear vision.

Let us reflect what is spiritual blindness? Blindness is a great spiritual symbol of sin and impaired spiritual vision. In this blindness, we see not the splendor of God, nor do we see as God sees.

The Gospel clarifies us to get rid of our spiritual blindness. If we unfold the Gospel, the blind man strongly believes that Jesus is the prophet, Messiah and the Lord. The Gospel last week and today's Gospel informs us both were encountered by Jesus, were touched by Jesus, and transformed by Him to a new life. Both stress strongly and believe that Jesus is the Messiah. Both began to witness about Him.

The difference between these two is that the first one (The community) believed in Him. In the second people around Him, the Pharisees closed their heart and rejected Him; even the disciples and they started questioning the power of God.

When people are blind in their heart, they close their heart and reject anyone to enter in their hearts. All of us have blind spots -- in our marriages, our parenting, our work habits, and our personalities. We are often blind to see and appreciate the presence of God within us as His Holy Spirit and His presence in others. Even practicing Christians can be blind to the poverty, injustice and pain around them. The root causes of our blindness: Namely, self-centeredness, greed, anger, hatred, prejudice, jealousy, addiction to evil habits and hardness of heart.

According to Pope Benedict XVI, the miracle of the healing of the blind man is a sign that Christ wants not only to give us sight, but also open our interior vision, so that our faith may become ever deeper and we may recognize Him as our only Savior. He illuminates all that is dark in life and leads men and women to live as "children of the light" (Lenten message-2011).

Our pride like of the Pharisees also makes us spiritually blind. This blindness refuses us even to admit that God or Christ exists. In their pride, the spiritually blind claim that everything ends with death and that there is no life after death.

What shall we do? Ask God to remove the spiritual blindness, and pride. Jesus is ready to reach to us to heal our blindness. Let us become a witness of faith like the blind man. Amen.