

Second Scrutiny

Today we hear the story of the man born blind, the second of a set of readings that must always be proclaimed whenever we celebrate the Scrutinies. How are today's readings so important for those who are preparing for initiation? Why are they so important for us who are already baptized?

These readings teach us about our baptismal promises. You have already heard the story of the Samaritan woman that was about the woman fulfilling her role in proclaiming the Gospel. She reminded us that our baptism commits us to a life of evangelization. Today's Gospel reminds us that we are committed to a life of constant conversion, from being blind to seeing.

If we are sincere about asking God to "open our eyes," to see as God sees, then we must also be willing to change the way we live our lives so that our lives reflect God's point of view, and not ours.

And, so we ask in this gospel who is truly blind? And what kind of blindness is hardest to heal. You notice how many times in this chapter, that someone begins a statement with the phrase...we know. But in truth, they did not know and all through the story we see the Pharisees become increasingly blind. Blind to the Son of God who stood in front of them.

This is the hardest blindness to heal, not the man blind from birth, but the people blind by choice. Why would anyone choose to be blind by choice? Perhaps, because you can get used to the darkness, just as you can get used to the light. Many of us have blind spots, blind to racial prejudices, blind to what goes on in the company we work for.

Blind to the needs of others especially those closest to us. There was another time that Jesus cured a blind man. The man knelt before Jesus and spoke a prayer. That we might want to whisper now and again. He simply said, "Lord let me see. Let me see the things I need to see, the people I may have hurt, the wrongs I have done. Let me see your goodness to me. Let me experience your love for me. At all times in all places, Lord let me see." We can only see part of the picture, what's on the outside of a person. But God sees deeper, into the heart of that person. God sees the fullness of that person's potential. God sees that person's intricate and detailed beauty.

Jesus tells the blind man "you have seen the Son of Man, you have seen the Christ; the one speaking with you is he." What if each of us could put on some glasses—"God glasses"—that allow us to see that intricate and detailed beauty of each person? Imagine how differently we

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would act if we remembered Jesus' words ("you have seen Christ, he is speaking with you now").

How differently we would act if each time we encountered our co-workers, we saw Christ. How differently we would treat our parents, our children, our spouse, and our classmates, our friends, our enemies. How differently we would treat the people who sit around us in church, the people we see here every week but to whom we never talk, the people who don't speak our language, the people who don't look, act, or think the way we do. How differently we would treat the homeless, the people we label as failure, as sinner, the people we label as conservative, liberal, gay, straight, too much of something that doesn't fit our point of view. Imagine if each time we encounter each other, each time we speak with one another, we "see" Christ, we "hear" Jesus. How different our world would be.

Our Elect, Robert and Shalini/Wayne are/is with us here today. In three weeks they/he will be baptized. They/He will be clothed in white and given the light of the Easter Candle. They/He will be anointed with oil as priest, prophet and king in Christ. And they/he will stand with us at this table to give thanks and break bread and drink wine, becoming with us what they eat, the Body and Blood of Christ.

Dear Elect, in a moment you will stand in our midst (along with your godparents). We will pray for you that God's light may heal the dark places of your lives and strengthen each of you. Your baptism will change you. It will change your identity. It will change the way you "see" the world, and thus, it will change the way you act within the world. For this is the duty of the baptized: to be imitators of Christ and to see as God sees.

We, the faithful, stand with each of you, not to judge you, not to test you, nor to evaluate you. No, we stand with you to give you the courage and strength that you will need to face those dark places. We will ask God to help you see those moments of failure and weakness as God sees them—not as reasons to condemn you, but as opportunities to love you with an even greater love. Seeing you as God sees you, we give thanks, for you are a sign to us that God is still making all things new.

When we see as God sees, all we can do is stand and praise God for showing us a glimpse of heaven.