

A Gospel Reflection

Sunday, March 22, 2020

1 Samuel 16: 1-13 ♦ Ephesians 5: 8-14 ♦ John 9: 1-41

Do we really see others? Christ seems to push us to do just that this week. But not to see with our eyes, but rather to see with our very being. Do we really see the people in our lives? What surprises wait for us when we let go of our presuppositions, our willingness to take people at surface values, and our fear of engaging with others?

In the first reading, Samuel doesn't see the one he is to anoint — David — until after he has learned that all the others that *appear to be* the one, are not. People pretend. They wear masks (... okay, we aren't talking about medical-grade anti-droplet masks, here ...). We don't want to let others truly into our lives, so we cover up. And they don't see us as we are. We don't see them as they are. God strips this away here. The second reading challenges us to live visibly, in light, and to wake up, to see.

Similarly, the Gospel this week is about seeing what matters. The disciples see a sinner – how else to explain the blind man's misfortune, except that it is deserved? The Pharisees see a threat: the established order does not make a place for a happening like this. The blind man's parents see their son, and don't ask any farther.

Again, it is hard to break out of the pattern.

Even the blind man himself doesn't see Jesus until he is asked, "Do you believe?"

Sometimes, it takes a radical shift in life to make us reach this radical shift in our seeing. The breaking we are all experiencing now from our work, our social lives, indeed, our regular and cherished routines is just such a radical shift. What matters now to us? We see hard times. We see despair, and we see each other stepping away.

But remember: Jesus sees us for who we are.

And Jesus invites us to see each other deeply, truly, meaningfully.

During these next weeks, while we are planted like seeds in the darkness, let us seek the light in others. When we come together again, we can see — not in the ways we are used to, but with new understanding, with new compassion, and with a new coming together. In so doing, we will be guided in the right paths, a few steps closer to the Kingdom of God.

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