

Homily of the Fourth Sunday of Lent of Year A

In the first reading, Samuel, in a way, was blind as to who God was to choose to replace Saul as king of Israel. God guided him until he anointed David. If not by God's guidance, Samuel would have made a wrong choice. It was good that he listened and followed God's directives. He was patient while the seven sons of Jesse were presented to him. He was patient until David was brought from the fields. I think God is teaching us not to be in a hurry to jump into conclusion and judgment especially when we do not know the whole story, and when things are not clear. We need a little more praying and reflecting for light, and listening to God's signs. This does not in any way encourage prolonged indecision and unending procrastination.



In the Gospel we see the physical blind man healed by Jesus and spiritual blind Jews who refused to see God's wonderful work in Jesus and to recognize that Jesus came from God. The man who received his sight believed in Jesus, recognized Jesus as Lord and prophet, and worshipped him. The Jews on the other hand did not believe in Jesus and were unrepentant. Therefore, they remained spiritually blind.

Physical blindness is when a person is unable to see due to the corruption of the eye by some disease or deformity. On the other hand, spiritual blindness is when a person due to the corruption of the mind loses sight of the truth. The person no longer follows the path of truth. The person can even go as far as silencing the truth. The person is in the dark.

Let us examine various types of spiritual blindness:

Some people are blind to God's goodness in their lives. Such people do not count their blessings. They only count their woes. They are always quick to complain about what is going wrong. They hardly see what is going right. They see half-empty glass instead of half-full glass. They see a dark spot on a white sheet instead of a white sheet with a dark spot.

Some people are blind to the good things in others. All they see are the wrong things, and they don't stop criticizing. Such people are blind to God's gifts in others. They are never satisfied with what is available. They are more concerned and worried about what is lacking. It is as if such people are always propelled by some negative spirit. The Gospel of today is a good example.

Some people are blind to those in need of their help or blind to where their help is needed. Such people are quick to turn blind eye to responsibilities that require their attention. An example of this is the priest and the Levite who passed by the side and avoided the man who was left near dead by the robbers (Luke 10:25-37).

Some people are blind to their faults. They hardly or never accept that they are at fault or that they got it wrong. Such people are self-righteous and 'holier than thou.' The Pharisee who prayed to himself in the temple is an example of a self-righteous person (Luke 18:9-14).

There are those who are blinded by gifts they received. Any gift aimed at blinding someone is bribery. Concerning such gifts Exodus 23:8 says, "Never take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and distorts the words of the just." And Deuteronomy 16:19 also says "... You shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes even of the wise and twists the words of even the just."

There are people blinded by vices like anger, jealousy, envy, greed, lust, improper ambition, pride, stubbornness and ignorance. There are people blinded by a cloud of confusion and are in the dark of what to do and what not to do. There are times we are blind to God's will as it was the case with Samuel in the first reading.

Every spiritual blindness is a dwelling in darkness. What is needed is the light of Christ. The second reading invites us, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." All of us have one form of blindness or the other. Jesus has anointed us with his word, and we are at the Pool of Siloam in this Eucharistic celebration. With heart of repentance, let our prayer be like the prayer of the blind man in Luke 18:41, "Lord, that I may see again."

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