

Readings: 1 Samuel 16: 1 6-7 10-13, Ephesians 5: 8-14, John 9: 1-41



Fr Michael says:

Christ the Light of the World

From the Samaritan woman we come to the man born blind, the second phase of John's taking us on our faith journey of affirming, Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life, next week. The blindness of the man is symbolic of that of the leaders of the Jewish Nation. He comes to faith through Jesus. Jesus works with unlikely characters, following the example of the choice of David, as King by Samuel! It is Christ who enlightens us, as we have heard from Paul, when he urges us to base our lifestyle in keeping with that light. John shows us how we grow in faith: "Lord, I believe" marks the progression of the man to light, as the Leaders go in the opposite direction with their closed minds.

We all have a basic question to answer: "How well do WE see?" As the man saw more in Jesus than did the leaders, so are we to be aware that there are more forms of blindness than purely one: selfishness blinds us to the needs of others; insensitivity - to the hurts we cause to others; snobbery - to the equal dignity of us all; pride - to the reality of our own faults; prejudice - to the truth about others; hurrying - to the beauty of our world; materialism - to our spiritual values; superficiality - to the true worth of others, so judging by appearances.

We also "see" with our mind, heart and imagination: a lack of vision gives narrowness of mind; a small heart and poor imagination - all of which leads us to more darkness, loss of vision and shrinks our world. Today we rejoice with a man who comes to see in faith and in reality. It is the same with us - we take great care of our natural sight, so we should take even more over our faith sight and vision - this is what our real journey in life is. It is not searching for new landscapes, but having and using our new eyes to explore the real richness of our lives!

A few years ago there was a total eclipse of the moon, which was one of the great headlines and many people stayed up in the hope of seeing it. We might well ask: "Why all this interest in something which will disappear?" Would we normally stop and admire the full beauty of a full harvest moon on a clear summer's night. We would do well to reflect upon the words of Emerson: "The fool wonders at the unusual, the wise person wonders at the usual."

This week we would do well to reflect a little on our faith vision, as we prepare to celebrate the fullness of that vision in the revelation of Jesus as "The Resurrection and the Life!"



Fr Jean-Marie says:

Theme: Encounter of Jesus with a man born blind.

The third to the fifth Sundays of Lent are traditionally used for the preparation of the catechumens to be baptized at Easter. The themes of water, light and life in these three Sundays are meant not only for the instruction of those about to be baptized but also to revive the faith of the believers.

The theme of this Sunday is that of Light. This theme invites the Christian community to meditate on the meaning of baptism. In a world where people walk in the darkness away from God, the baptized people are called to be the light that shines in the darkness. Darkness is all that stands opposed to God. As Baptised Christians, we are expected to identify with the blind beggar in the Gospel who has been given sight. In the healing of the blind man, Jesus gives a sign that he is the true light of the world. This sign shows that Jesus, the light of the world, can bring light to those who live not only in natural darkness but also in the darkness of spirit and of hopelessness. The man born blind encounters Jesus and can see, first with his physical eyes and then with the eyes of faith. We are each that person.

In the second reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians, we are reminded that before our baptism we were pagans who lived in darkness and we were involved in shameful things that sometimes are not good to mention in public, but the light of Christ shines on us since the day of our baptism. We are therefore children of light, called to bring forth fruits of goodness, justice and truth. When we are living a life of sin away from God we are like blind people whose eyes need to be opened. There is more to sight than seeing the light of day. There is a deeper malady, a spiritual blindness which comes from closing the windows and doors of the soul and keeping out Jesus who is the light of the world. Even though the blind man was blind, he saw more than the Pharisees. He had more faith in Jesus than these religious leaders who had no faith in Jesus and took him to be a sinner. The gospel is a faith story of a man who came to faith in Jesus. The man overcame his blindness and made a profession of faith: 'Lord, I believe.', and he worshipped Jesus. While he opened his heart to the light of faith, the Pharisees, though physically sighted, closed their hearts and became more spiritually blind. During this time of Lent, we are invited to abandon our attitude of indifference and lack of faith, but like the blind man we are encouraged to go to Jesus and let him open the eyes of our hearts and minds.

The first reading and Gospel remind us that God does not judge a person according to appearances, but he looks at the heart. Often times God chooses those whom the world rejects (such as the boy David) to lead his people.