

Homily 4th Sunday Lent Year A 2023

Seeing, light and blindness punctuate our Gospel this week.

Seeing refers not only to the eyes but also to the mind and to our inner spirit of faith. St Ignatius invites us to have *a simple eye*.

We support a charity called Kiss that offers help to those in need in Africa. Kiss is also an abbreviation of **Keep It Simple Stupid**, the simpler the better. Often a blind person has a much clearer understanding of this *simple eye*, the eye of faith, that those with sight do not have. On Friday we celebrated the feast of St Patrick who found strength, support and consolation in seeing God's presence in creation and the environment around him. Hopefully, we are able to do the same aren't we??

One of the striking phrases of Jesus is his statement that the blind man was blind so that he, Jesus, could give testimony to God, his Father. The Jewish belief was that anyone afflicted by any sort of ailment or illness was the consequence of sin, not necessarily by the person but by someone in his or her family. Jesus denies this belief. Today, we are challenged to see in those who suffer from any form of disability or sickness as opportunities for us to bear testimony to the power of God, just as Jesus did, by offering them our support, care, love and help. God will work through us if we let him.

St Patrick was inspired by the joyful music of creation; everything spoke to him of Grace, of the presence of God. Think of the presence of grace as the air that we breathe. The air is all around us and within us. We call grace supernatural because it speaks so eloquently of the presence of God. The simple eye of faith experiences and acknowledges that presence of God with joy and love and gratitude.

Thomas Merton writes about this in the following way.

For a moment, let us think of the world and time as the dance of the Lord in emptiness; which we can call the *Cosmic Dance*. If we were to listen carefully to the silence around us and throughout the universe, we would hear its music. However, the more we persist in misunderstanding life, the more we seek to analyse it into strange finalities and complex purposes of our own, the more we involve ourselves in sadness, absurdity and despair. Fortunately, all of this is of little import, because no despair of ours can alter the reality of things, or stain the joy of the cosmic dance which is always there. Indeed, we are in the midst of it, and it is in the midst of us, for it beats in our very blood, whether we want it to or not. Yet, the fact remains that we are invited to forget ourselves on purpose, cast our awful solemnity to the winds and join in the general dance, the dance of God.

Let us pray:

O Lord, thank you for the many times that you have made your presence known, breaking through spiritual blindness so that we might see you. Thank you for filling our hearts with the sublime joy of being with you.

You are present with us at all times. Help us recognise and respond to your presence, to see you in unexpected places, to hear the still, small voice of your Spirit. Help us sense your presence in places we might call "secular" or "unspiritual." Help us live each moment with the assurance and joy that comes from being with you. Amen.