

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Nov 19th 2013**

This month I was privileged to go on a three day Encounter retreat with our students. I was thrilled to be asked to walk on the journey with them as an adult leader. Many students had signed up because they had heard that this was a pinnacle experience for them on campus. Some were attending because their friends were there. Others were discerning where God played a role in their life and how could they be open to the call. For some, they felt a calling to a year of service after graduation and how could they explain that to their parents? For others, it was the discernment between joining the priesthood and the desire to be a father. And for others it was how could they deepen their faith.

In today's reading, the blind man called to Jesus, the Son of David, and asked for pity. He was persistent in his call. He knew he needed to seize the moment and get Jesus' attention. And Jesus healed him...physically and spiritually. While he gave the man his sight, he shared that he was saved because of his faith.

Part of the Encounter retreat experience helps individuals reflect on their gifts from God, how they find Christ in others and how they can be Christ for others. How can our faith grow and develop so that we can lead by example? How can we use our gifts to further encounter Christ? Just as the blind man, how can we be persistent when others tell us to be quiet? How can our faith be a testament to others?

I can honestly say that the students I had the privilege to talk with and get to know this weekend were that blind man to me. Their faith, their questions, their strength and their vulnerability were grace filled. I knew the Spirit was with us as we reflected and prayed together. I told them they were light years beyond me on their faith journeys and I meant it. I was quite simply humbled by them.

Throughout the weekend, we would hear talks from individuals which spurred our personal reflection with questions. Similarly, I leave you with the following questions.

Who is that blind man for you, if you are in the crowd saying "shhh"? If you are the blind man, are you persistent in your faith? When encountered with difference, do you remain true to your values while respecting the dignity of people who you disagree with, as in the first reading?

Our faith journeys are personal, yet we have a great deal to learn from one another. Thank you for engaging with the Online Ministries as you walk your path.

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