

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Oct 25th 2015

Growing up in South Dakota we were focused on the game of basketball to help keep us entertained during the long, dark winter days. I love basketball... loved playing it and love watching games. When I was in 5th grade my mom took my siblings and me to the spring basketball tournament at the rural high school where she was a teacher. The game was exciting and I could see the zone defense patterns the players were using. But I could not see the scoreboard so I must have asked my mom every few minutes about the score or how much time was on the clock. My mom was exasperated with me and told me to just look at the scoreboard. When she realized I couldn't see it she discovered that maybe my complaints of not being able to read the chalkboard in school were more involved than just my teacher's messy handwriting.

My parents set me up for an eye exam. My hometown afforded us the opportunity to walk or ride our bikes wherever we kids needed to go so when it came time to pick up my new eyeglasses I could walk downtown to get them. Almost 50 years later I can vividly remember my sense of awe and amazement of what I was able to see on my leisurely walk home. The leaves on the trees. The signs on the local businesses. Budding flowers, a neighborhood cat, a friend on the playground down the street.

As I pray with today's gospel that feeling of awe and amazement flooded back. I am inspired by the abiding faith of Bartimaeus as he asks Jesus to have pity on him. Given the most basic invitation to approach Jesus he springs up. What a demonstration of faith in Jesus. And through his faith in Jesus he can begin to see. When do I enthusiastically ask for Jesus to help me? When I am blind to the graces with which God has blessed me? The first reading from Jeremiah has a beautiful metaphor for our journey with Jesus: With weeping they shall come, but with compassion I will guide them. I will lead them to streams of water on a level road, without stumbling. When I am open to God's guidance to better use my gifts in service with and for others?

St. Ignatius gave us the gift of the daily Examen prayer to reflect on the events of each day so we may appreciate God's presence in our lives and to discern his direction for us. Praying the Examen is such a powerful experience. And when I fail to make this prayer a daily practice I once again become blind. I stumble along in darkness not open to the love of Jesus.

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy. Do you see what I mean?

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