

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Nov 20th 2017

The scripture readings for today have a profound juxtaposition of despair and darkness followed by hope and salvation. In the First Reading, we see the horrible effects of turning away from God. Breakers of the law seduce the people of Israel to sacrifice to idols, profane the sabbath and burn incense to pagan altars. People of faith, who observed the laws were condemned to death. Imagine the despair of the faithful who would rather die than profane the holy covenant!

Some of us may see frightening parallels to our world today. The conflict of cultures, the idolatry of materialism and the growing feeling of isolation that many people of faith may feel. Even if we do not in our culture truly have the fear of death the uncertainty and insecurity of our daily lives can wear down our faith.

The gospel description of the blind man however has a message of hope. He sat by the wayside begging as not only was he blind but he was poor. He was in fact exactly the symbol of mankind which Christ came to provide solace and salvation. First the blind man saw his need. Do we see our need? As the bystanders told him “Jesus is passing by” he boldly spoke out to Jesus. This is a good example of how great opportunities pass in front of us in our daily lives. Do we reach out to our Savior? The blind man was ridiculed and rebuked but persisted. Are we affected by those knowingly or not inhibiting our spiritual progress?

None of us have ever seen Jesus with our own physical sight and thus we in fact are blind to until we come to him. Despite our ‘blindness’ Jesus is still able to hear our voice among the cacophony of the world—indeed he is listening for our voice and will respond to us. Our faith is the foundation (as it was for the blind man) for us to receive mercy and healing from God. However, faith is not just believing -- the belief must motivate an action.

The lesson of the blind man for us is that during confusion, despair, insecurity and illness our faith shall compel us to the action of crying out to the Lord—and in faith we shall be healed.

“I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whomever follows me will have the light of life.”

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