



TO SEE AS GOD SEES

4th Sunday of Ordinary Time, A

March 25, 2017

Church of the Holy Angels – 5:00 p.m.,
8:00 a.m., 12 Noon

1. This week someone made me aware of a movement called, “Narrative 4”
 - It’s a story exchange, in which individuals are randomly paired off and each shares a story that in some way defines them
 - afterwards, each participant takes on the persona of their partner and telling their partner’s story in the first person
 - the story exchange is based on the simple idea that by knowing the story of another, we are able better to understand each other
 - the video I saw had a member of the NRA matched with a parent who lost her son in the Sandy Hook shootings
 - and a man who ran a website in which the gun that killed Trayvon Martin was sold by George Zimmerman for \$250,000. He was paired with a woman who was shot 3 times in a mall shooting in Salt Lake City in which her daughter was killed
 - I can tell you that I had chills down my spine listening to these testimonies and stories and the new perspectives and insight that came, as a result
 - the exchange wasn’t easy but it was amazing what can happen when people are to listen and to talk – they grow in their ability to see

2. Today’s Gospel is about blindness
 - and, at the core of each of us, is some sort of blindness
 - Origen once said that to be holy is to see with the eyes of Christ
 - to recognize that we are connected to each other in love because we are grounded and rooted in God
 - to not see the other as a threat, but as a brother or a sister

3. In John’s Gospel, every word is important
 - this blind man is begging at the gate
 - and the Pharisees ask, “Lord whose sin is it – his or his parents that caused this”
 - and Jesus says, “I am the light of the world.”
 - I am the light by which you see
 - as St. Paul says, “It is no longer I, but Christ who lives in me.”

4. Jesus approaches the man
 - he spits on the ground and makes a kind of paste – a salve
 - the symbolism is powerful
 - St. Augustine – spittle represents his divine power, earth represents humanity
 - incarnation is the salve that heals sin-sick eyes
 - it’s Christ himself being rubbed into our eyes
 - allows us to see
 - Jesus is forming something out of clay, playing with the dust of the earth and turning it into a creative power

- God creates us from nothing
 - there is an “unfinished-ness” in him so he gives him vision
 - The creator in Jesus wants to re-make us
5. An Early term to describe Jesus – “soter” Gk – healer, Latin version – salvor – savior
 - salve, healing paste, healing balm, healing our blind eyes
 6. The man washes in the pool – comes back able to see
 - nothing peripheral in John’s Gospel
 - pool is evocative of baptism
 - we share his life, drawn into his life
 - how do we see, how do we learn how to see? - in the church
 - baptized into Christ Jesus, grafted onto his body
 - and, together, we are able to see
 7. All of us in the church teach each other how to see
 - the community of the baptized helps you to see
 - washes in the pool and his sight returns
 8. In John’s story, this isn’t the end
 - Jesus does something really amazing – but what’s the reaction?
 - how often in the Scriptures the reaction is ANGER, DISAPPOINTMENT, OUTRAGE
 - they’re shocked, dismayed
 - the Pharisees try everything in their power to undermine what happened
 - “this just looks like the blind man” – “No, it’s me” says the blind man
 - now, a legal trick – he healed on the Sabbath day, he must be in league with dark powers
 - the man, “I don’t know if he’s a sinner or not, I was blind now I see”
 - he’s just stating the facts
 9. Today the polarization and divisions among us threaten our future
 - Jesus wants us to see – to recognize the stranger among us, to pay attention to the dignity of every human life, to admit the common bonds that connect us
 - the conversations are hard, uncomfortable at times, but necessary for life
 - to grow in holiness, to see as God sees