

Homily – Fourth Sunday of Lent C (Scrutinies Cycle A Readings)

Last week, in our First Scrutiny, Jesus revealed himself to the Samaritan Woman: “If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink’, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” The operative words here are, “If you knew the gift of God.... [if you knew] who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink’....” When one does not know God, one cannot relate with him. We want to know God, to love Him and to grow in the awareness of the mysteries of God and “be filled with all the fullness of God” (cf. Eph 3:19; RSV). This was not just about physical water; it was about gift of self, her entire being. When you offer someone a gift package, it is actually the gift of your generosity, your love, your goodness; simply put the gift of yourself. So Jesus was lovingly inviting the Samaritan woman to give herself to God. She did, and in return, God gave her Himself, the “Living Water” (Jer 17:13; John 7:37-39).

This week of our Second Scrutiny, our Gospel passage (John 9:1-41) shows Jesus giving himself upfront to a man born blind. He restored his sight. Obviously, the man had no idea who did him this favor. Jesus later met him and asked, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” [The man answered], ‘Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have seen him, the one speaking with you is he.’ He said, ‘I do believe, Lord,’ and he worshiped him.” Dear Elect, you will see Jesus; he will restore you at the Easter Vigil. Nevertheless, this is not just about a physical healing. It is more about a spiritual transformation. One could have physical eyes functioning properly, yet be blind through ignorance; evident in our First Reading (1Sam 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a): Samuel had gone to Jesse’s family to anoint a king. Notice how he “looked at Eliab and thought, ‘Surely the LORD’s anointed is here before him’”. But the LORD said to him: “Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the LORD looks into the heart.” Our judgments and discernments will be wrong unless God guides us. Hence, the Psalmist says, “The LORD is my light and my salvation” (Ps 27:1).

Dear elect and my dear brothers and sisters, ignorance of God’s will and sin is blindness of a more profound sort. Jesus has come not just to help us with our physical senses, to see, to hear, to perceive, to touch, etc; he has come to transform our spiritual senses, to open the eyes of our minds to see what hope his call holds for us. He has come to open the inward ears of our minds to hear the word of God and to give us a new heart and a new spirit to live holy lives. He is “the light of the world.” Obviously,

he is a physical light like the sun or moon or star. Though our Elect have been instructed considerably in the faith, they are still somewhat ignorant and blind about Jesus and his mysteries. Human power alone cannot penetrate “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph 3:8). However, after baptism at the Easter vigil, their eyes will be opened through the sanctifying grace of God. They will then enjoy a new joy and a living hope (cf. 1Pet 1:3). Then the words of the Scripture in the Second Reading (Eph 5:8-14) will be fulfilled, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

Before healing the blind man, Jesus was asked by his disciples, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus clarified, “Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him.” He clarifies that certain human disabilities are not the fault of the persons affected. However, the real point here is not about physical disability. Again, it is about the spiritual; we were all born with the disability and blindness of Original Sin. Is it our personal fault or our direct parents’ fault? Not at all! It is to show the glory of God. Jesus sacramentally restored the blind man: “...he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, ‘Go wash in the Pool of Siloam’.... So he went and washed, and came back able to see.” This healing symbolizes the gift of “new life”; it evidently changed his life and his relationships with the world around him. Just as Jesus “sacramentally” restored the blind man, he will sacramentally restore our Elect through the Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. Their lives will be transformed forever. To God be the glory!

Finally, after the blind man received healing, he lived a witnessing life. Our Elect too will be restored and join us to become Christ’s fearless witnesses. The restored man was confronted by the Pharisees and Scribes, “How were your eyes opened?” He explained to them the marvels of God. In their desperate bid to intimidate him, they asked, “What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?” Fearlessly, he testified, “He is a prophet.” We too must be fearless and bold in witnessing to Jesus and his Gospel values in our world today. Thus, St. Paul declares to the already baptized, “You were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth.”

**We are Children
of the Light**