

## Are We Blind?

Are we blind? Interesting question, isn't it.

And at first, I think everyone in this room would answer, "What? No!"

I mean, some of us may have trouble making certain things out sometimes, especially if we are older. And some of us may wear powerful prescriptions, but at least we can see enough to function. So, if I ask the question, "Are we blind?", I could see how one could initially react as if I were crazy.

But brothers and sisters, there is more to life, more to what's *real* in this world, than what we can reach out and grab. And there are, sadly, *so* many ways to be blind that have nothing at all to do with glasses or sight.

The readings point this out (if we can *see* it).

Samuel is sent by the LORD to anoint the next King of Israel. And Samuel, being a pretty insightful guy, looks at Jesse's first son, sees the ancient equivalent of an NFL quarterback, and thinks, "Surely the Lord's anointed is here before him." But what does God say? "Not as *man* sees does God see, because man sees the appearance, but the LORD looks into the *heart*." Was Samuel blind? No. But it took seeing as *God* sees for Samuel to find David.

Now look at our (rather long) Gospel. Jesus says two key things that help us answer my original question. First, He says, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do *not* see *might* see, and those who *do* see might become *blind*.” Then, in answer to the Pharisees’ question, Jesus says, “If you *were* blind, you would have no sin; but *now* you are saying, ‘We *see*’, so your sin *remains*”.

It isn’t hard for us to criticize the Pharisees 2,000 years after the fact. The Gospel of John makes it clear all over that the Pharisees were a force opposing Jesus for most of his public ministry. So we can see Jesus making them look dumb, and kind of laugh behind our hands at how He treated them.

But brothers and sisters, I would argue that what Jesus told the Pharisees we can apply to ourselves in some measure *every day*. How many ways are *we* blind to God’s will for us? How often do *we* declare, “We see!”, but yet *our* sin remains?

Do WE SEE the little ways that sin creeps into our lives? Or are we *blind* to them? Do WE SEE how the television shows we choose to watch, or the lyrics to the music we allow ourselves or our children to consume, turn us away from God? Do WE SEE how the small, sinful choices we make harden our hearts, and make it easier to rationalize sin later?

Do WE SEE the gradual cheapening of the gift of our sexuality, the attack of the Evil One against the way we *best reflect God's life-giving love for mankind?* Do we see ourselves making excuses, like “Everyone does it”, or “God would understand...” (He won't.)

But Thanks be to God, brothers and sisters, that God wants *better* for us.

Maybe we *can't* see all the ways in which we separate ourselves from God, but there is *hope*. St. John of the Cross, in his book Ascent of Mount Carmel, compared the soul to a pane of glass, on which the Divine Light shines. When we turn our souls away from that light, we can think that glass, that soul, is just fine. But as that soul, that windowpane turns toward the Light...gradually, the smudges and imperfections show better. And it's in that *turning*, that *conversion*, that our *hope* lies.

Because as we *turn more toward the Light of Christ*, we can see things we didn't see before. WE CAN *SEE* Jesus Christ speaking to us in His Word, the Sacred Scriptures. WE CAN *SEE* Jesus Christ in the person of the priest, offering us *forgiveness of our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation*. And most importantly, brothers and sisters...WE CAN *SEE* Jesus Christ, Body, Blood , Soul and Divinity, really and substantially present in the Blessed Sacrament. WE CAN

SEE *Christ*, so that when the minister of Holy Communion says the words, “The Body of Christ”, our AMEN, our YES, has *real meaning*.

And ultimately, WE CAN SEE what needs to change in our lives, and we can *accept* the grace from God to *change* it!

Are we blind? Yes...but that’s the nature of being human. Our sinful nature *blinds* us to the reality of God’s love for us, sometimes. And to the extent that we give ourselves over to that nature, as Jesus told the Pharisees, “[our] sin remains.”

But *thanks be to God*, brothers and sisters, that God wants more for us! *Thanks be to God* that He sent the Son of Man, so that we can *believe* Him, believe *in* Him, and be *saved*.

This season of Lent offers us a chance to *turn toward the Light of Christ*. Lent offers us a chance to *examine our lives*, to *root out that which draws us away from God*, and to let Christ cure *our* blindness.

Are we blind? Interesting question.

“Not as *man* sees does God see”. Christ wants us to *see*, with *God’s eyes*.