



Blessed Sacrament Parish
Homily by Monsignor Michael Kuse
March 11, 2018 Fourth Sunday of Lent

Reading I First Samuel 16:1, 6-13

Psalm 23

Reading II Ephesians 5:8-14

Gospel John 9:1-41

Homily

Last week I went to Effingham. Father Chuck had to go out to Arizona for the Cubs spring training. This week I am here for Father Chris who is in Florida for spring training with the Cardinals. I am thinking something is wrong with this picture, but I am happy to be with you. The readings today focus on blindness in our own hearts. Blindness means: I am not seeing how wonderful God is. And I am not really listening when God is speaking to me, and picking up on what it all is about.

There was a grandfather and a grandson, and the grandfather was reading his grandson a book about frogs. The book was saying, "Now the frog jumps, and now the frog croaks, and now the frog does this, and now the frog does that." When the grandfather finished reading the book, the young boy asked, "Grandpa, can you croak like a frog?" The Grandfather said, "Yeah, I think I can croak like a frog. But why are you asking me?"

The boy said, "Well the other day mommy and daddy were talking and they said that when you croak, we are going to Hawaii for a family vacation." We kind of hear what we want to hear in life, don't we. But there is something about that. There is something about how we listen to God, and about when God wants to say something to us. And so you and I have to ask ourselves, "Where is my blindness today? What is disturbing me? Why can't I see that Jesus is going to come now, and he is going to die on the cross and then we have the resurrection on Easter — am I ready for that? Do I really let God into my life in the way I want God to be there?"

This past week I was in San Antonio, Texas, for a retreat. Father Rolheiser was giving the retreat and I thought it would be a good thing for me to do. You had to be retired to attend. There were 90 of us there coming from Canada, the United States and all over. Early on in the retreat Father Rolheiser said, "I am going to give you an open forum and I want you to ask whatever question you have on your mind. Just throw it at me."

A woman raised her hand to speak. The theme of the retreat was that as you prepare to die, you give away your debt. Giving away your debt means to keep giving, and if you keep giving — you are going to be ready when that moment comes. But if you hold back, you may not be ready.

She said, “Father, I have one question about something that troubles me. I believe I know who Jesus is, and I think I am a good person. My husband and I raised a wonderful family and we have wonderful children and grandchildren. Now, I don’t know if I sinned, or what we did wrong. But our children are not going to church.” She asked, “Could you shed some light on that?”

Father Rolheiser said to her, “Don’t you waste even one moment worrying about that. Your children are in the hands of God. Everything you did was the right thing to do. They just have to wait until it is their moment. And when it is their moment they are going to be able to see, and when they see — their faith is going to be so powerful in their lives.”

You could just sense when she asked that question that there were others with the same problem. The majority of the people were all couples who had children and grandchildren and when she asked the question — there was a silence that came over the entire room because she was saying something that many parents throughout our world are facing. And yet, Father Rolheiser had the wisdom to say, “Don’t worry about that. Don’t disown anybody, don’t hassle anybody — just keep living your faith. Give it away and your children will never forget, and your grandchildren will never forget the power of seeing God live in your heart.” That is something for all of us to think about.

What is the blindness in our lives? We ask, “Why do things not go right for me, and they go right for other people?” And in your heart you are saying, “How come everything goes right for him, and everything goes wrong for me?” Jesus says, “Don’t be blind. Everything in your life is planned. I knew who you were going to marry before you even fell in love, and I knew what children you were going to have even before you thought of conceiving a child. I know all of your ups and downs, and the world that you live in is always in constant chaos and turmoil. But when you know that I love you — that is your rock. I am your rock. That’s what really holds you together.”

So this morning we have to learn: God loves me. God loves my children. He loves my grandchildren. He loves the people I don’t even get along with. He loves people who are different from me. He holds everyone in the palms of his hands and says, “If you know I love you, then watch me die on the cross, and then watch me come alive again, and it is that spirit and love that is going to overwhelm you. And then just like a blind man you will say, ‘I know you are a prophet, I know now I can see.’ ”

At different times in our lives, Jesus says to each one of us, “I think you’re going blind. Let me into your heart.” When he comes in — everything changes.

So we go back to grandpa and the little boy. Grandpa is touching the heart of his grandson and he has his full attention. When he finishes reading, the little boy says, “I heard the whole story but only one thing pertains to me. It is what mommy and daddy says. And do they have the answer?”

There is only one person that has the answer to take away all of our blindness. There is only one person who can create in us such a joy in life that we know how to laugh and we know how to cry. We know how to push people away; we know how to bring people in. But when it is all over with, it is the same answer. "Don't worry about it. It's my world. It's my kingdom. All I ask is that you stay close to me. Be my grandson, be my granddaughter, be my son, be my daughter, be my brother, be my sister." May we all realize that God already has it all planned out for us. And when we get to Heaven we are going to join our parents, our grandparents, our children and all our loved ones. And the answer is going to be so profound. But without our blindness, we may never have asked the question.

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