

PASTORAL REFLECTION FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Sunday, March 19th, 2023

"I only know I was blind and now I see." John 9:26

Last month I drove one of our sisters to her cataract surgery, and for her appointment the next day. Some years ago she suffered retina damage in the other eye, so that if anything went wrong with this surgery, she ran the risk of being almost completely without sight at age 75. For that one brief day, I was able to enter into the fear she faced with that prospect and it gave me a perspective on blindness that I have never had. Fortunately in these days of modern medical miracles, her surgery went well and she sees even better now. My friend risked going INTO blindness for the rest of her life. Today we have the gospel of Jesus bringing a man OUT of blindness since birth and he has the opposite world-changing experience of suddenly seeing EVERYTHING.

The amazing thing is that he is also plunged into a theological debate with the schooled Pharisees who can't recognize a miracle when they see one, AND HE HOLDS HIS OWN against them, his "betters" who view him marked by God as twisted for being born with a disability. Imagine the shock of the man born blind. The world was the same as always, but his relationship to it was totally transformed! He would no longer be dependent, feel useless, be regarded as sinful for being born blind. Last week, with the Samaritan woman, we learned how deeply Jesus looks into our depths to heal whatever is broken there. This week we see how Jesus strips every barrier to clear sight if we will but allow it to happen. We learn to see without the limitations of the last generation's vision, inherited prejudices, grievances and fears.

May we find in our hearts overwhelming gratitude for those events in our lives, even the painful ones, with which WE have been gifted and that have "opened our eyes" to truth, to the pain that others are experiencing in a way that touches us to reach out to them. May we welcome the insights we receive into the stark realities of poverty, the desperate needs of refugees, the way we are ravaging our earth, and the loneliness of someone close to us.

May it be our prayer . . . "that we may see."

Sister Chabanel Mathison, O.S.U.