FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (Year A)
Homily Mar 22, 2020

I. Introduction

One day a woman was driving on a freeway when she noticed a large truck behind her, uncomfortably close to her car. She stepped on the gas, but as she accelerated, so did the truck—and the truck driver began rapidly sounding his air horn. The woman was naturally very frightened, and thought the truck driver wanted to harm her. She exited the freeway—and so did the truck. She turned down a side street—and so did the truck. In a state of panic, she pulled into a service station—and so did the truck. The woman got out of her car and ran away screaming. The truck driver got out of his rig and ran to the woman’s car, yanked open the rear door, and pulled out a man who was hiding in the back seat. Later the woman learned that the stowaway was a suspect in several cases of assault, and that his method was to hide in back seat of cars belonging to unsuspecting women. This woman, of course, had no idea that he was there—but the truck driver, because of his higher vantage point, was able to see him and to rescue her (Pulpit Resources, Vol. 18, #1, p. 46).

God has a higher vantage point; He sees things we’re unaware of: dangers, threats, needs, opportunities, and possibilities. The Lord wants and intends what’s truly best for us—but He needs our cooperation if this is to come about. Rarely do we have the full picture of what’s going on; quite often we’re not sure what God is trying to do, or where He’s taking us. Sometimes we might even run away from what He’s asking of us or offering to us, just as the woman was fleeing from her rescuer. We must always remember, however, that the Lord wants what is truly best for us—even more than we desire it ourselves. We can become more in tune with this truth by trying to live according to God’s values, not those of the world. True happiness results from self-sacrifice; true freedom comes from self-surrender, and true sight is achieved by trying to see as God sees.

II. Development

The Lord judges not by appearances, but by truth. This is made very clear in the 1st Reading. The prophet Samuel was sent by God to anoint a new king of Israel, and was told it would be one of Jesse’s sons. Seeing the impressive appearance made by the eldest son, Samuel automatically assumed he was the Lord’s choice—but he wasn’t. So it was with all the other sons; they may have appeared worthy and suitable on the outside, but God rejected them, for He looked into their hearts and found them wanting. It was David, the youngest and least likely candidate, whom Samuel was ordered to anoint—and this apparently insignificant shepherd boy became the greatest king in Israel’s history and the founder of the royal dynasty from which would come the Messiah. God’s judgment confounds the values of the world, and as St. Paul says in the 2nd Reading, we must adopt His values by living as children of the light. Proclaiming this truth was the most important thing Jesus did for the man born blind. Yes, it was wonderful that after all those years the man could finally see with his eyes—but physical sight lasts only as long as we’re alive. It was much more important that the man was now able—and willing—to see with his heart. The Gospel story has a happy ending not because of the miracle, but because the man believed in Jesus and worshipped Him.
III. Conclusion

The religious leaders who questioned the man represent those who are blinded by the values of this world. This miracle—opening the eyes of a man born blind—should have convinced them that Jesus was from God, but acknowledging this would have meant admitting they were wrong and giving up much of their power and prestige. In the world today there are many people who would rather remain spiritually and morally blind than allow God to restore or improve their vision. We ourselves must be on guard against being led astray by prejudice, selfishness, pride, materialism, spiritual laziness, complacency, fear, worry, and all sorts of false values which this world promotes. Instead, we have to take our faith seriously, praying for God’s guidance and trying to grow in His love.

Imagine you were blindfolded and placed in an unfamiliar room. How would you find your way around? You wouldn’t simply start walking; you might bump into something and injure yourself. No, you’d move slowly and carefully, and use your hands to reach out so as to find your way safely—and if someone was directing you, you’d listen carefully to the sound of his voice. That’s an analogy of life. We’re blindfolded in the sense of not knowing everything that’s going on or what to expect. The people without spiritual values are those who just barge ahead—and who sooner or later bump into walls, trip over furniture, or even walk into dangerous or deadly situations. God wants us to proceed carefully, feeling our way.

Our hands represent faith and love, and we must use them to reach out and touch our surroundings and discover the proper path. The Lord gives us directions and sometimes even leads us by the hand, helping us avoid traps and hazards and dead ends, and pointing out safe paths to follow. We can’t know or see everything that’s going on—but God can. He has a higher vantage point, and He wants to share it with us. If we have confidence in Him, all will be well—for faith gives us true sight and leads us into everlasting light.