

Our Lady of Lourdes

Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 14, 2010

1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

Deacon Bob

“Open my eyes Lord. Help me to see your face. Open my eyes Lords help me to see.” That beautiful song seems to sum up the readings today. Sometimes we see as we want to see. Sometimes we just plain do not see clearly at all. Our first reading today is an example of just that. Samuel is sent by God to Jesse for from his sons will come the chosen king. Samuel is convinced that the one God has chosen is before him. God tells him not to judge by appearance only for man sees not as God sees.

We might say but isn't appearance important. When one is looking for work surely one of the things they are told is to present a good appearance. No doubt this is important because of the way we set our values but one's appearance may not really say much about their ability to do the job. How often have we been surprised to find out that our first impressions of someone were not really accurate? Sometimes we get upset by the actions of others without having all the facts about why they are acting in a certain way. We are called to try not to judge but to try to see as God sees. What a challenge that is.

Thinking of challenges we are to see Christ in others, not just the people we like, the ones we get along with or those that think the same way as we do. We are to see Christ in those who are very different from us especially the poor the homeless, that person on the street corner who is begging. It may be easy to judge that person thinking surely they could do something about their situation. Can we see Christ in them without judging? Can we see Christ in that person who has hurt us or disappointed us? It is sometimes so easy to want to hurt the person who has hurt us. We are challenged to see as God sees and not to judge.

When we come to Mass on the weekend it is pretty easy to find God. He is present in Sacred Scripture, present in the bread and wine that become the body and blood of Jesus and he is present in each of us. Are we able to find God in all the places of our lives?

Let me ask a question. Has God ever helped you? Has God ever done anything really nice for you? God is present in our lives in so many ways. A man named Roc Bottomly tells this story about a dream that helped his daughter, Bethany. It wasn't Bethany who had the dream but one of her friends. While Bethany, Jody and two other girls were on vacation Jody dreamed one night that they were in a bad accident. In her dream Jody was the only one wearing a seat belt and she was the only one who survived.

When she told her friends about the dream they all responded by fastening their seat belts. Later that day the driver of their car lost control when a tire blew out. The car rolled over but none of them were seriously injured. The investigating officer made this comment. “If you hadn't had your seats belts on, the outcome would have been very different.” Has God ever helped you and maybe you didn't even notice it? Sometimes when God helps us we call it coincidence. The dictionary defines coincidence in this way, “The occurrence of events that happen at the same time by accident but seem to have some connection.” Have you ever

experienced an event that happened at the same time by accident? Have you ever needed something and had it fall into your lap? Is it coincidence? Just maybe it was the hand of God quietly working in the background?

A man lost his wallet. Anyone who has done that knows what that feels like. The panic that sets in over credit cards and how they might be used, replacing a driver's license and all the other things in one's wallet. The man's first reaction was to pray to God to help him find it. This was a good thing. A few minutes later it dawned on him that he had worn some clothes the previous day while working in the yard. He looked in the pants pocket of the work clothes and there was his wallet. He said never mind God I found it. Could his response been different? Perhaps something like thank you God I found it.

Do we ever thank God for the happy coincidences? I would imagine that all of us in this church have experienced happy coincidences in the past and we will most certainly experience them in the future.

One morning some time ago my wife and I were traveling in from our home. We live some distance from church. We were getting off I64 onto I295 when I looked up and saw a car coming directly at us at a very high speed. We were both shocked and could not believe what we were seeing. It all happened so fast. I moved to one side of the road and the car coming at us moved to the other side and flew by us. Coincidence or the hand of God, what do you think?

We see things in our lives in very different ways. The gospel story is a good example of just that. The man who was given sight by Jesus was ultimately able to see who Jesus was. Jesus asked him "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" The man responded "who is he that I might believe in him." Jesus tells him that "you have seen him the one speaking with you is he." The man born blind was not only able to see physically but spiritually as well.

The man's parents who must have been overjoyed at their son being able to see also were very frightened by the questions of the Pharisees. They could see only the consequences of what the Pharisees could do to them. They could be disgraced and their life ruined by being thrown out of the Temple.

The Pharisees could only see the law and that Jesus by curing on the Sabbath had done something contrary to the Law. They had good physical eye sight but spiritually they were blind.

May God open our eyes so that we can see Christ in the person sitting next to us and in all those that we encounter. May he open our eyes to see his presence in the coincidences and in all aspects of our lives.