

March 3, 2008



Sunday Word

Fourth Sunday of Lent

Seeing life as God intends us to see it

March 2, 2008 :: [1 Sm 16:1-13](#); [Ps 23:1-6](#); [Eph 5: 8-14](#); [Jn 9:1-41](#)

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Do you see what I see? In 1604, Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra completed his novel of the chivalric tales of a would-be knight named Alonso Quixano (Don Quixote). “The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote of La Mancha” is a clever and humorous tale in which an inn becomes a castle, a skinny nag of a horse becomes a valiant steed, a dull-witted neighbor becomes a wise and practical squire-governor, a poor farm girl of questionable reputation becomes a highly valued lady, and windmills become ferocious giants. Don Quixote no longer sees what the rest of the world sees. He lives in a world of fantasy, deception and delusion. The novel ends with his complete disillusionment and death.

Sin takes away our ability to see life as it is intended to be. There is deception, disillusionment and death when sin grabs hold of us and we refuse to let it go. Lent is a time to repudiate sin and adjust our view, attitudes and perceptions with sober and life-changing insight.

During this Laetare (Latin for “rejoice”) Sunday, we are told that our turning away from sin, doing penance and embracing transformation is to be done with “joy”! There is joy in the realization that we’ve been given another chance to change our lives and walk away from the deception, delusions and fantasies that prevent us from seeing what God sees.

And what does God see? In the Book of Samuel, God sees into the heart of a shepherd boy, the eighth son of Jesse of Bethlehem, and chooses him to be the next king of Israel.

And what do Jesus’ disciples see? In today’s Gospel they see a blind beggar and judge him to be either a sinner or a man being punished for his parents’ sins. This isn’t what Jesus sees. Jesus sees a man who is about to be a witness of God’s glory and power. And parallel to this sixth of Jesus’ seven signs in the Gospel of John is the story of creation in the Book of Genesis. God’s first act was to create light in darkness. Now Jesus identifies himself with this God of creation by giving light to the eyes of a blind man — a man who has lived his whole life in darkness. Then Jesus anoints the blind man with a mixture of saliva and dirt, smearing the clay on the blind man’s eyes reminding us that God made Adam out of the clay of the earth (Gn 2:7) and then breathed life into him.

So what does the former blind man now see? Following his washing in the Pool of Siloam (Hebrew for “sent”) he sees not just “the man called Jesus” (Jn 9:11), a “prophet” (Jn 9:17) or a man “from God” (Jn 9:33). Indeed, he sees and recognizes Jesus as the “Son of Man” (Jn 9:37) who is the light of the world who has come to open the eyes of the blind so that all might see as God sees.

In our own lives we often fall prey to deception, delusions and fantasies that lead us into sin. And it is just at those times that we need to remember our baptism and our anointing with the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of confirmation. We have been chosen and given the grace to see what God sees — not disillusionment or death, but hope and life.

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