

Pastoral Message: October 24, 2021

The Christian of the twenty-first century, probably more than ever, needs to learn that we need to pray with our eyes wide open and our feet moving in the right direction. The reading from Jeremiah has this sense of sight or vision that the people of God are being led back to Jerusalem for a time of consolation and healing. There is an energy that is toxic and that can lead us towards blindness, and there is an energy that is good and can lead us towards healing and wholeness. I recently read an example of this. The 1965 march towards Selma to Montgomery helped move our nation towards civil rights. This energy is different than the 1922 March on Rome that led to Italian fascism. I believe, if we keep our eyes open, we can think of examples of these two types of movements' energy towards violence and destruction and also energy towards love and healing for our society. Martin Luther King once said that an eye for eye leaves everyone blind. We as a faith community are called to get caught up in working for justice and healing in our world. We must reflect upon what motivates us and whether those motivations are based upon love or are we being blinded by our own selfishness, greed, and violence. This tends to enter us very subtly, and oftentimes I think all of us can be unaware of our own blindness. This is where, as a community, we can gently help each other see and broaden our vision.

Today's gospel shows us that blindness is not the problem. I remember meeting a woman early on in my priesthood that was blind and yet she seemed to be able to see better than I could because she was motivated by service and love. I would often be amazed at her willingness to crochet for others and her sense of awe and wonder as she would be inquisitive about what she was learning through braille. This is the difference between the disciples last week who were motivated by what is in it for me and their own ambition and Blind Bartimaeus who only desired to be able to see. This is Jesus' last miracle in the Gospel of Mark before his crucifixion in Jerusalem, and Bartimaeus, unlike others, seems to be able to see more clearly and followed Jesus with a more pure heart. As we reflect on our journey of faith, may we learn off of the Bartimaeus' of the world, admitting where we are blind and allowing the Lord to help us see.