

Homily — 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, B, 2018
by Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS

There is a difference between having sight and "seeing."

We've reached a part of Mark's Gospel, just before Jesus enters Jerusalem to give his life for life of the world.

This theme of this part might be summed up as SEEING, as opposed to simply having sight.

The section begins and ends with two blind men coming to see. It takes Jesus two attempts, before the first man comes to see. That man seems to represent all those who at least at first fail to see clearly what the mission of Jesus is. Among those who fail to see are the pharisees, lawyers, disciples, the 12 - especially the 12.

Last week, we heard a story about James and John asking Jesus to fulfill their request. Jesus asks the same question of them he asks of Bartimaeus in today's story: "What do you want me to do for you?"

The response of Bartimaeus in this part of the story is very different from that of James and John.

He throws off his cloak, his old way of seeing life, of doing things. He says quite simply, "I want to see."

In that, he comes to represent the true disciple of Jesus who comes to see with the eyes of the heart rather than simply having physical sight.

Notice, Jesus does not touch the man. He simply acknowledges his faith that is expressed in his being bold, pushy, insistent and gutsy in coming to Jesus.

And it says that the man then goes from sitting on the side of the road to following Jesus as he makes his ways to Cross and then to Glory.

So our friend, Rev. Ron Rolheiser, has some suggestions about ways we modern-day disciples might be healed of our blindness, our lack of seeing.

- By shifting our eyes from seeing through familiarity to seeing through wonder. The British writer G. K. Chesterton said once that familiarity is the greatest of all illusions. He says that the secret to life is to learn to look at familiar things until they look unfamiliar again.**

We open our eyes to truly see when we open ourselves to wonder.

- **By shifting our eyes from seeing through paranoia and self-protection to seeing through metanoia and nurture.**
It is not incidental that the first word out of Jesus' mouth in the Gospels is the word "metanoia," a word that opposes itself to "paranoia."
We open our eyes to truly seeing when we shift from a posture of self-protection to a posture of caring for others.
- **By shifting our eyes from seeing through jealousy to seeing through admiration.**
Our seeing becomes distorted whenever we move from the happy state of admiration to the unhappy state of envy.
Our eyesight is clear when we delight in admiration.
- **By shifting our eyes from seeing through bitterness to seeing through eyes purified and softened by grief.**
The root of bitterness is wound and the way out of bitterness is grieving.
Tears clear our eyesight because they soften a heart hardened by wound.
- **By shifting our eyes from seeing through anger to seeing through forgiveness.**
Nothing taints our eyesight as much as anger.
It's the most debilitating of all cataracts.
And nothing cleanses our vision as much as forgiveness.
Nobody holding a grudge sees straight.
- **By shifting our eyes from seeing through longing and hunger to seeing through gratitude.**
Longing and hunger distort our vision.
Gratitude restores it.
It enables insight.
The most grateful person you know
has the best eyesight of all the people you know.

You SEE, a key to a happy, fulfilled life is really about seeing much more than about simply having sight.

You can be a person who is physically blind or all but blind, and still see your way to wonder, admiration, forgiveness and gratitude.

