

Year A Fourth Sunday of Lent Homily Outline

God allows trials and struggles because that's what we need to be able to grow up, to be enlightened and to be able to see what's important, what life is really about, what we are made of, and ultimately, he allows trials so that we will be able to see clearly who God is and who we are.

- Hit the subscribe button on our youtube channel – **so we will be able to livestream the Rosary with the sisters at 7:15 Monday through Friday.**
- It is a great Gospel for meditation **Wednesday night Spiritual Formation session at 6:30pm – on how to Meditate with the Scriptures.**

1. The “man-born-blind’s” journey from darkness to the clear vision of faith – contrasted with the pharisees willful descent into darkness.

- I think there are some elements which really apply to our current situation.

In the midst of that – two paths that open up in front of us.

1. Selflessness, generosity, setting aside time for prayer, growing in love for our family and concern for our neighbor, doing our work as best we can
2. Selfishness, complaining, laziness, frustration and excuses

From Moses (over 3000 years ago) – Exodus 30:15-18

SEE, I HAVE TODAY SET BEFORE YOU LIFE AND GOOD, DEATH AND EVIL. IF YOU OBEY THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD, YOUR GOD, WHICH I AM GIVING YOU TODAY, LOVING THE LORD, YOUR GOD, AND WALKING IN HIS WAYS, AND KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS, STATUTES AND ORDINANCES, YOU WILL LIVE AND GROW NUMEROUS, AND THE LORD, YOUR GOD, WILL BLESS YOU IN THE LAND YOU ARE ENTERING TO POSSESS.

IF, HOWEVER, YOUR HEART TURNS AWAY AND YOU DO NOT OBEY, BUT ARE LED ASTRAY AND BOW DOWN TO OTHER GODS AND SERVE THEM, I TELL YOU TODAY THAT YOU WILL CERTAINLY PERISH; YOU WILL NOT HAVE A LONG LIFE ON THE LAND WHICH YOU ARE CROSSING THE JORDAN TO ENTER AND POSSESS.

From the Didache (2000 years ago):

There are two ways, one of life and one of death; but a great difference between the two ways. The way of life, then, is this: First, you shall love God who made you; second, your neighbour as yourself...

And the way of death is this: First of all it is evil and full of curse...(then it lists all of these evils that humanity is capable of).

- Are you the kind of person who has the faith to see everything that happens in the world and your life as an opportunity God is giving you to grow in holiness – and a call to repentance and conversion?
- Or, is your main concern to structure your life and the way you see reality according to your own designs and plans – and anything that gets in the way of that is just evil?

The thing I was drawn to the most in my prayer is the *development* of this man from

- blind and helpless beggar
- through this struggle with the Pharisees and defending his miraculous healing
- to fierce believer and defender of Jesus who takes his place beside the Lord.

Three scenes of the neighbors and then the pharisees interrogating him – that lead to him giving testimony – there's a development here:

1. He tells his story to the neighbors – I was the blind beggar, Jesus did this, I did this – and now I'm not blind
2. And then to the pharisees: Jesus did this, I did this – and now I can see
 - a. Okay now contrast that with the pharisees, there is a division among them, and they are taking the path of descending into darkness.
 - b. But the formerly blind man, is growing in vision, he's making progress – he's figured some stuff out – and he tells them "He is a prophet!"
 - c. And then his parents are called in – but it's not their job anymore to answer for him – he's growing up and becoming his own man
3. And so the third scene of the interrogation with the pharisees
 - a. They are not seeing what is clearly before their eyes – "explain this again..."
 - b. And the man is growing in clarity, in courage and strength, he's battling back – "I told you already, and you didn't listen!"
4. In the midst of this trial the man comes to a clarity of faith. The physical healing starts this process, but it is not the real gift of vision, the real gift of vision is faith in Jesus Christ. He's really starting to see not just the with physically healed eyes – but he's seeing the truth – **and he can only get there through his trial.**
5. And that all concludes with the man
 - o seeing the long-foretold Son of Man and worshipping Him
 - o and taking his place beside Jesus as a man of faith, of courage and conviction.

So, it's a real simple principle:

6. *God allows trials and struggles because that's what we need to be able to grow up, to be enlightened and to be able to see what's important, what life is really about, what we are made of, and ultimately, he allows trials so that we will be able to see clearly who God is and who we are.*

2. Jesus seems absent throughout

- But, I get the feeling he's watching, he sees it all – he is at a distance but he's keeping an eye on his guy here, and he's delighted and proud of him.

Conclusion

The Lord is at work. He has roughly rubbed some mud in our eye and told us get going.