

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, Cycle A, March 26, 2017

Sometimes, when the lector proclaims the scripture reading at Mass, it stands out more. It's not merely that the lector has rehearsed the reading, pronounces the words without stumbling, and speaks loud and clear. It goes beyond that. As the lector reads, it becomes obvious that he or she deeply believes the words being read. They echo with his or her faith. They really mean a lot to the lector.

I remember very clearly one lector who closely matched that description, down to a tee. She was a young woman in her twenties. As she read the scripture passage in church, you might have noticed if you were watching that she never would glance down at the book, not even once. She looked out at the congregation the whole time. You see, she didn't need to look down at the book. She was blind. She was reading the Scripture passage in Braille, touching it with her fingers.

Some people can see better than others. Some need glasses with lens so thick they look like the bottom of a coke bottle. Others have eyesight as sharp as eagles. And, of course, we can take that one step further. With a microscope, we can see little animals that can fit on the head of a pin. We can discover a whole world, hidden away from our everyday view of things. At the other end of the scale, with a telescope we can see stars and galaxies, light years away. Modern technology promises to bring us to the edge of the universe. What will we be able to see then?

And yet, there appear to be some things that still escape detection. For example, it doesn't seem as though we can see too far into the future. Meteorologists can predict the weather only a few days in advance, and even then only in general terms. The same holds true, on a larger scale, for the world's political and economic climate. Where will the next war break out, and when, the political equivalent of a hurricane? Will it be in the Middle East, in Africa, in Asia?

When we look at the future, we might as well be blind. We can't see a thing. We are like the blind man in the gospel story who is sitting by the side of the road. His blindness keeps him from travelling down the road. It prevents him from being fully involved in life. It reduces him to poverty and puts him at the mercy of others. He has to beg in order to survive.

Only when he meets Jesus, is he able to walk down the road, instead of merely sitting beside it. Only when he meets Jesus, is he able to enter fully into life. Now, he will be able to take up a trade and make a living for himself. Jesus is able to give direction and meaning to his life. Jesus gives him sight, not only physical sight, but spiritual sight as well.

That is also what Jesus can do for us as well. He gives direction and meaning to our lives. He enables us to look into the future with the eyes of faith.

He assures us that, no matter how our political battles go, that God will ultimately be victorious over sin and death. Even though it may not always look that way now, that will be obvious on the Last Day, at the Final Judgment.

Jesus Christ assures us that we have nothing to fear, because he is beside us. We may not be able to see him, but we are not alone. He is with us, in the midst of difficult times, in sickness, in hard financial times, in times of grief. He remains with us, even though we cannot see him.

Those are the things that we can see with the eyes of faith. That is what enables us to face the future without fear. Otherwise, we are like that blind man, sitting at the side of the road, with nowhere to go. Only with Jesus Christ, can we see.