

Opening Our Eyes to the Good

Last week when we had the Gospel featuring the woman at the well, who has this conversation with Jesus that leads her to a deeper faith, one of the things I mentioned in my homily were the “wells” that we can drink from; the things that can satisfy us for a bit, but ultimately leave us just as thirsty. Some of them are sins, but others can be things such as control, or calming fears in the wrong way. For instance, with the corona virus that is impacting all of us, we see the fear turn irrational with the hoarding of food, toilet paper, hand sanitizer or people watching news nonstop as if they can control the virus. We might calm down for a bit, but if we think about it endlessly, we certainly won’t find much peace. I know, as I’ve certainly been there and worried endlessly about things in my own life before.

This week, we hear the story of a man blind from birth whom Jesus cures. In the story, he is open to seeing God’s presence, but those who can see are actually blind to what God has done for the man.

I think sometimes we can be blind too. And while on the one hand what I see before me is a concerning situation with a virus I can’t control, I also see a lot of other good things.

I see an amazing principal, Kelly Roche, and great teachers at our school formulating plans to ensure our students are able to continually learn no matter how long we go without classes in the building.

I see a lot of people in the world praying for one another, and helping one another through these challenging times.

I see the hard work of doctors and scientists as they work to contain and eventually cure the corona virus.

I see the hard work of people who work in hospitals, clinics, of people who work in supermarkets to restock the shelves, and of the farmers who keep us fed.

I see the love people have for God in how they continue to come to Mass and celebrate the sacraments.

I see a God who is not removed from the world, but is a part of it and is with us through all of our struggles and pains. And I see Him working through so many amazing people, both here at the parish and in our greater community and world.

Sometimes, all we can see is the bad. Corona virus is a bad thing. People having to curtail activities; no sports; and the risk of possibly catching the virus, these are also not good things. There is no getting around the fact that Corona virus is a scary thing. But so is the fact that we do not know what tomorrow brings. We do know that one day all of us will die. And we can go to the well and try to forget about that or think we can control it, or be blind to our mortality, or we can move forward with hope and peace. The kind of

hope and peace that come from seeing past the present situation to the future. I truly believe we will emerge from this moment in time stronger. But I also believe that long after it passes, as we all go through the difficulties in life that are brought about by sin, by the unknown, by health issues, by financial troubles, whatever it may be, it can be easy to just see what is in front of us and not the other good things around us, in particular God.

Hopefully our eyes are opened to this important reality: God loves us, and it is a love that knows no limits. Saint Paul summarizes it so beautifully in our second reading when he says we were once in darkness, but now we are children of the light - so live as children of the light for light produces goodness. The light of God does indeed dispel the darkness of sin, but because we are all prone to returning to darkness at times in life, we need to make sure the flames of faith in our heart are always growing brighter and stronger; for the brighter the light, the more we can see. Yes, there is darkness right now - but it's no match for the light produced by so much good all around us and from God. My hope is that during these trying times, you can see that light too, knowing God will never abandon you, and when you open your eyes, you can really see His presence around us in so many ways. Corona virus won't go away tomorrow. But even when it does go away, other things will take its place. But they are no match for the power of God - so let's open our eyes and not be blind to it.

God's blessings to you and your loved ones,

Fr. Paul