

Beauty in Weakness

There is a video that is trending on youtube right now. It has over 14 million views in just 3 days. It is a video of a blind and autistic, 22 year old man. On first sight, Kodi Lee didn't seem to be very inspiring as the America's Got Talent judges look on. They saw an Asian man with his mom holding him as he was walking with his walking stick. They would ask him questions and there would be long awkward pauses in between with similarly awkward responses. When they asked if he was ready to perform he said, "I'm readaay!"

But when Kodi began singing Donny Hathaway's song, "A Song for You", the sound instantly pierced the hearts of all who were there. His clear crisp voice reverberated throughout the auditorium as many watched in shocked silence while others burst into cheers. He effortlessly sang in falsetto making a beautiful noise and bringing many to the brink of tears. When he finished, the crowd erupted into a standing ovation and everyone was crying having just witnessed something so, so magnificent and so beautiful.

I think this video is so inspiring for so many people because it shows that in the midst of darkness and suffering, in the midst of pain and tears, beauty is possible. The beauty does not necessarily remove the suffering—Kodi was still blind and autistic as he was singing—but beauty exists within the suffering and makes it possible not only to endure but to embrace. This beauty gives hope.

Will you allow God's song to be sung in you?

Sometimes we think that God only wants his praises to be sung through our strengths. It is true and it is a good thing that he does want to be glorified through our gifts. This is one of the reasons why he gave us those gifts in the first place.

In our first reading, the early Christians saw Apollos' gift of speaking, taught him the fullness of truth, lit him on fire (metaphorically) so that he could eloquently defend the truth with boldness and confidence.

Even the memorial today commemorates St. Justin Martyr who also converted to the Catholic faith, and then began to use his philosophical gifts to defend the faith through his writings and eventually by giving up his life as a martyr.

Indeed, God wants to be glorified in our strengths as he did through these men, but he also desires to be glorified in our weaknesses.

Here I am not talking about sin although our sins reveal the depths of God's mercy when we turn to him for forgiveness. Here I am talking our human faults and weaknesses. This is not an excuse to not improve ourselves and to not grow in our humanity. However, there is a time when we have tried our best, when we have given everything we have and we fall short because of our human frailty.

In our Gospel Jesus says something very significant about human weakness. "The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but will tell you plainly of the Father." When Jesus speaks of his hour he is speaking of the hour of the cross, his hour of weakness and it is in this moment that he will perfectly reveal the mystery of the Father and give perfect glory to him: "Father the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee."

Sometimes we can use our weaknesses as an excuse. Oh, God doesn't want me because I am weak. No, God wants all of you. He wants your strengths and your weaknesses and he wants to be glorified in both of them especially through our weaknesses because it will show that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Cor 4:7). Gladly therefore will I boast of my weaknesses that the power of Christ may remain in me.

Allow God's song to be sung in you, in your strengths and in your weaknesses, in your suffering and pain, and show to the world that the beauty of God's love is still possible in this vale of tears. Allow your song to reverberate through the auditorium of this world to give hope in a world that longs to hear that beauty is still possible in brokenness, in weakness.