

Who is leading

Homily for September 10, 2021

Friday 23rd Week Ordinary Time

A brand new lawyer in his brand new office on his first day in practice sees a prospective client walk in the door. He decides he should look busy, so he picks up the phone and starts talking: "Look, Harry, about that amalgamation deal. I think I better run down to the factory and handle it personally. Yes. No. I don't think 3 million will swing it. We better have Rogers from Vancouver meet us there. OK. Call you back later." He looks up at the visitor and says, "Good morning, how may I help you?" And the prospective client says, "You can't help me at all. I'm just here to hook up your phone."

In today's Gospel Jesus so to speak catches us in the game of looking for human respect, just like that young lawyer. He appeared to have it all together, was in control of the amalgamation when in fact he didn't even realize the phone wasn't connected.

So Jesus warns us don't live a disingenuous life, by being a blind person leading another blind person – because both will fall into a pit. And while that lawyer was fully qualified, at that moment he was motivated more by the need to look important than to welcome the person who had come into his office with sincerity.

Jesus has a way of asking questions that tap gently (or sometimes knock heavily) upon our heart's door and open it to deep ponderings. "Can the blind person guide a blind person?" he asked his disciples. Of course, both will fall into a pit. But what does the deeper "knocking" of that question suggest to us? Perhaps it is an invitation to ask ourselves: "Who is leading me?" Are we being led by our own blindness or that of others? Jesus wants to be our eyes. He wants us to learn to see what he sees in others, in circumstances, in our own selves, in God's action in life, and in the world. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to ask us: Jesus where do I need you to heal my blindness.

No student is superior to his teacher, but how fortunate if he can be like his teacher. What a grace to be just a bit more like Jesus today, to see a bit more as he would, to respond a bit more as he would, to receive others with the mercy and kindness he would show. That classic phrase is actually a strikingly profound one: What would Jesus do? Or in other words, what does Jesus see here that I am missing? Perhaps the best way to differentiate between splinters and beams is to recognize our own "beams" before fixating on others' splinters by letting Jesus be our eyes, letting him inform and renew our vision.

Since we are all children of God the Father, we are brothers and sisters with Christ as well. Christ is the only brother who can rightly say to us, "Let me take the beam from your eye," because he knows us more perfectly than anyone else. He knows beams from splinters and can extract either with precision, causing us the least amount of pain and the most complete healing. Let us surrender to our Divine Physician, trusting in his gentle care for our soul.

This is what St. Paul expresses so beautifully in our first reading from 1 Timothy. Here Paul says that Jesus was able to remove the beam from one who was a former blasphemer, persecutor and man of violence, who thereby acted ignorantly and in unbelief. But he says, when Jesus got a

hold of me and I surrendered to him, ‘the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the love and faith that our in Christ Jesus’.

St Paul both literally and spiritually was blind. Upon being healed he allowed Jesus to lead him. Ever since, St Paul’s words have inspired billions of people to in turn look to Jesus and say, Lord I am going to allow you to lead.

Thanks be to God Jesus enters into the room to not connect the phone but to connect the line of grace so with St. Paul discover what it is to be children of faith – how Paul saw Timothy and so live in the grace, mercy and peace that characterize those who are not trying to impress others but live trustingly in Jesus’ lead.

Jesus, I open my heart before you. You see the beams that keep me from seeing what you see, and you are the Brother who has the power to remove them. Enlighten my mind and strengthen my heart to act on what you show me in this moment of prayer and in the circumstances of my life. I ask you for the grace to see with your eyes and heart.