

--A Scrutiny reflection for the Fourth Sunday of Lent (Michael Prendergast)

The stories of the man born blind, the woman at the well and the raising of Lazarus from the dead are the readings from Year A used with the RCIA Scrutinies.

Why are these readings so important for those who are preparing for initiation?

Why are they so important for us who are already baptized?

These readings teach us about our baptismal promises. The story of the Samaritan woman at the well is not so much about the woman believing in Christ but about the woman fulfilling her role in proclaiming the Gospel. She reminds us that our baptism commits us to a life of evangelization. Likewise, the story of Lazarus is not so much about Jesus raising him from the dead but about having faith in Christ even when it looks like death has won. This story reminds us that we are committed to a life of faith and trust. And the story of the man born blind is not so much about the man being healed, but about seeing as God sees. Today's Gospel reminds us that we are committed to a life that reveals God's vision, to a life of constant conversion. This is what we mean by conversion.

If we are sincere about asking God to "open our eyes," to see as God sees, then

we must also be willing to change the way we live our lives so that our lives reflect God's point to view, and not ours.

Here's an example of how life changes once you're given a new perspective. How many of us wear glasses or contact lenses? Many might know what I am talking about. I wear glasses so I can see the smaller type. But for so many putting on glasses for the first time might allow them to see a tree that was once just a blob of green and brown. Perhaps they could see leaves and bark and such. But after seeing a tree through new glasses, they realized that a tree was more than just leaves and bark. The leaves had lines, and edges, and curves. There were birds in the trees that one could see. There were cracks and grooves in the bark that one may have missed before. As we reflect as well on Pope Francis encyclical *Laudato Si* we are reminded of the importance that trees provide for the environment.

Finally, being able to see the detail, the intricacies of nature, and its true beauty is like how God sees each of us. In the first reading, God told Samuel that God doesn't see as humans see. We can only see part of the picture, what's on the outside of a person. But God sees deeper, into the heart of that person. God sees

the fullness of that person's potential. God sees that person's intricate and detailed beauty.

Jesus tells the blind man "you have seen the Son of Man; you have seen the Christ; the one speaking with you is he." What if each of us could put on some glasses—" God glasses"—that allow us to see that intricate and detailed beauty of each person? Imagine how differently we would act if we remembered Jesus' words ("you have seen Christ; he is speaking with you now").

How differently we would act if each time we encountered our co-workers, we saw Christ. How differently we would treat our parents, our children, our spouse, and our classmates, our friends, our enemies. How differently we would treat the people who sit around us in church, the people we see here every week but to whom we never talk, the people who don't speak our language, the people who don't look, act, or think the way we do. How differently we would treat the beggar, the homeless, the people we label as failure, as sinner, the people we label as conservative, liberal, GLBTQ?, straight, too old, too young, too dark, too light, too smart, too dumb, too much of something that doesn't fit our point of view. Imagine if each time we encounter each other, each time we speak with one

another, we “see” Christ, we “hear” Jesus. How different our world would be? I love the Church’s teaching that says: “The human person is the clearest reflection of God's presence in the world; all of the Church's work in pursuit of both justice and peace is designed to protect and promote the dignity of every person. For each person not only reflects God but is the expression of God's creative work and the meaning of Christ's redemptive ministry. USCCB *The Challenge of Peace*, #15

Today we gather with our Elect, Russell and Julio. And while they will have to wait to step into the water of the font because of our current situation as we face the uncertainties of gathering due to the Corona Virus. We pray that soon they will be clothed in white and given the light of the Easter Candle. They will be anointed with oil as priest, prophet and king in Christ. And they will stand with us at the eucharistic table to give thanks and break bread and drink wine, becoming with us what they eat, the Body and Blood of Christ.

Dear Russell and Julio, today we pray for you that God’s light may heal the dark places of your lives and strengthen each of you. Your baptism will change you. It will change your identity. It will change the way you “see” the world, and thus, it

will change the way you act within the world. For this is the duty of the baptized: to be imitators of Christ and to see as God sees.

We, the community of St. Andrew, stand with each of you, not to judge you, not to test you, nor to evaluate you. No, we stand with you to give you the courage and strength that you will need to face those dark places. We will ask God to help you see those moments of failure and weakness as God sees them—not as reasons to condemn you, but as opportunities to love you with an even greater love. Seeing you as God sees you, we give thanks, for you are a sign to us that God is still making all things new.

To our candidate Courtney we also hold you in our hearts today. When we see as God sees, all we can do is stand and praise God for showing us a glimpse of heaven.