

The Man Born Blind

I was recently handed an article from St Anthony Messenger titled, "Not All Pharisees were Hypocrites." It lists a couple of examples that prove the point one among them is that some Pharisees actually became followers of Christ. The article also quotes the saying, "The less you know about something, the easier it is to generalize about it." Our own reading today gives us a reflection that we may miss at first, for our Gospel tells us, "and there was a division among them. So, they said to the blind man again." There was a division among them certainly tells us they were not all in agreement and there were ears who wished to give the healed blind man a hearing. Who struggled to see with eyes that were open?

We should look at the two biggest issues that the Pharisees are dealing with as a group and in their individual hearts They are struggling with their view that the

Sabbath has been dishonored and does not Scripture tell them and us today in the 10 Commandments: in the third Commandment to honor the Sabbath, to make it a day of rest and honor to God, to refrain from the hustle and bustle of everyday life .

The conflict here for sure was a stubborn, hardhearted interpretation of what that means. Jesus was showing them to open their hearts, their minds so they could see the Sabbath with a new, more perfect eyes.

The other issue also was struggling with Jesus declaring Himself the Son of God of being Divine. We can't blame them for challenging Jesus, we are all called to test the Spirit. Even today we have self-proclaimed prophets and charlatans we are called to be watchful and prayerful.

The blind man had physical blindness that Jesus cured him of but in the bigger picture Jesus was out to cure the blindness of those who would not see Him for who He was.

There is this saying that “The hardest people to convert are the people in the pews.” Often, we here in the church pews often become complacent think we have nothing to learn or we don’t need any further conversion. But that is the beauty and mystery of our Lenten season we are challenged as were the Pharisees to see Jesus anew, to strive to wipe away our old self and to become and see more like our Christ. Those of you who have memory of being invited by Uncle Sam to a paid 8-week camp, remember well the Drill Instructor in your face, “Yelling Hann you need an attitude correction.” They weren’t very original but effective anyways.

I think in some sense that is Lent a time to readjust and to allow the Spirit in.

I don't say any of this to make light of the current coronavirus issue we should be cautious but there are moments of light in all this. With everything shut down and families not running here and there how many families had the moment of eating together at dinner. One family we know talked about buying board games and reviving their family game night.

Through prayer and compassionate doing what we can, let us see the chance to remove our blindness and to strive to be renewed. These remaining weeks of Lent.

Deacon Frank Hann

St. Luke Church

Ellington CT

March 22nd, 2020