

## HUMAN BLINDNESS OR DEHUMANIZING VISION

Dear Parish Family:

I have been having trouble with my eyes, probably since July. There was a slight change in the prescription of my eye glasses which caused something to go off in my brain. So there have been various visits to the eye doctor (and soon a second opinion), various prescription adjustments, return to my old glasses for a few days, and now heavier lenses that cause my ears to hurt (maybe the ear doctor is next!). My eye turns in a bit - I can even see my nose - and that can cause some difficulty including headaches. I can see pretty well and I can function, so I am blessed in a sense.



I have come to see over the past few weeks that my physical limitations in sight may not be my biggest concern. It is a lack of vision that is preventing me from seeing the presence of God in myself, in the world I live in and am responsible to care for, and most humiliating, in failing to see the presence of God in others. I am pretty confident I am not alone in this.

We are coming to the close of Respect Life Month. It is an important time for us to reflect and consider the Church's teaching about the value and the gift of human life. We need to see the presence of God in the unborn and in their parents, regardless of the situation. We need to see the presence of God in the one who is facing the end of life due to illness or age and those who love them. We need to see the presence of God in the criminal, even the one on death row, and do all we can to restore them. These are probably the "hottest" topics. To respect life though is not the work of a month or a focus on one issue. It is about recognizing, supporting, and advocating for human life at the beginning and the end of life and everywhere in between. It is not and never has been a "one-issue" month.

I feel as though we are seeing a more insidious type of vision or blindness that we need to be more vigilant about and aware of in this day and age. It is about dehumanizing the "other" and being blind to the humanity of the person among us. If

we can take away their human dignity or perceive them as "less than human," other doors of darkness open wide. We see this happen so often in a world, country, and even Church at times divided. Lies and words of hate become truth. We see this in the power of technology that permits, and can even encourage us, to see another person as an object for pleasure or hate without consequence. We see this in a labeling or boxing in of another because of this or that belief, perspective, background, ethnicity, orientation, etc.

We see the "this or that" before we see the presence of God, the gift of life within that person. We are starting from the wrong point.

Imagine if we made a more conscious effort to do this on both individual, local, or global levels. Perhaps it's a good time for you and me, in these moments to "take courage" and "get up" knowing this is the truth to which Jesus is calling us.

We see threads of starting from the wrong point in today's Gospel. I'm not sure who was more blind - the man born blind or those who tried to silence him or rebuke him. Instead of seeing the human person, the child of God before them, did they perhaps just see a disability, a difference, a distinction that set the blind man apart from them. This makes it much easier to push someone down, to tell them to be quiet (or worse), to walk away from them, to isolate them, to yes, dehumanize them.

You know who didn't? Jesus! The same Jesus who reaches out to you and to me, looking at us with great love and mercy. Let us pray that in these difficult times that instead of blindness to humanity or the vision of dehumanization, we will see the child of God before us and even be courageous enough to say, "What do you want me to do for you?"

Let us pray for this vision of Jesus.

Please pray for me. I promise the same.

*Featherman*

