

See others as Christ sees them
By Bishop Milan Lach, SJ

Two blind men live close to where I do in Parma. Sometimes, I observe how they walk and get around with their white canes. When I see them, I often thank God for the gift of my sight, for the gift to see around me all of God's creation. Many times, we don't appreciate what we have. We take things for granted, like our sight, until we come to the point where we risk losing them.

In today's Gospel (Mt 9:27-35), Jesus heals two blind men who cried out, "Son of David, have pity on us!" It is wonderful that Jesus Christ is really the healer of our sight — our physical sight but also our spiritual sight. Many of us have sight, but we are blind. We are blind because we do not see all around us that God is present in our brothers and sisters every day. We are blind in this way, and yet we are proud of it.

Many times, despite our sight, it seems we don't know where we are going. Just as a blind man is not able to follow somebody physically without being close enough to touch him, the Christian who is spiritually blind, who is not willing to open his spiritual eyes, cannot follow Jesus.

In Old Testament times, the Torah forbade the blind man from entering the Temple in Jerusalem. Why? Because only perfect people could enter and praise God in the Temple in Jerusalem. But in the New Testament, Jesus is available to everybody — to every man and woman, despite their ailments — and he will heal them.

This is the Good News of the New Testament: that Jesus gives us spiritual sight. When? At our baptism. When we were baptized, we received spiritual sight. There are many wonderful prayers about light in the baptismal rite: the light of the world, who is Jesus Christ for us.

How does Jesus see people? Jesus sees people with love and mercy. How do we see people? Often, we see them with judgment, and this is our sin. We do not confess this sin, but we should. We need to ask Jesus to help us not to have the sight of the proud but to see how he sees — with eyes full of love and mercy for our spouse, our parents, our kids, boss and teachers — so that others who see you looking at them experience a gaze that heals, that encourages, that blesses.

We need our spiritual sight to be purified. We can do this by fasting, for example. We also need to pray and to ask Jesus to be healed of our spiritual blindness. He will ask you, as he did the blind men, if you really do want to be healed. You have to say, "Yes, Jesus, I want to be healed from my infirmities, from my blindness because I want to follow you."

+Bishop Milan

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