

### **Not as man sees does God see.**

The Gospel of St. John is a much more meditative one. The other three almost sound alike because they string out episodes of Jesus's life from shared sources; they offer an almost day-by-day narrative. But John's Gospel dates from the 90's AD, some sixty years after the days of Jesus and from within a community of Christians that had a lot of time to ponder selected events for deeper insights. I mean whereas the other Gospels begin with almost legendary birth stories of Jesus, John begins with In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word became flesh. That in itself signals that the events that follow are to be taken as deeper than they appear – indeed may deliver an encapsulated account of your life as well as the character in the story.

Aren't we all born blind? I mean, I was born into a world that looked like this – as my natural vision began to become conscious: a World War had finished with endless casualties and destruction; totalitarian movements took over nations, making my future ominous; the economics of the world collapsed; my young parents along with millions of others paid the price – not only in things like foreclosures, joblessness but worry and addictions to relieve worry – until another World War rescued our economy – but at what a cost. Ideologically I was raised racist – by no choice of my own. That was only one of the prejudices I was taught to maintain for security's sake. I was indoctrinated in religious controversies that originated centuries before I was born but became very present to me now – to sort out the people around me by what people long dead said they were. My anticipations of the future were made wary – even beyond death itself with the threefold option of heaven, hell or averaging out at purgatory. You get the point. I was in many ways born blind just like the fellow in today's reading . . .

Until the Gospel with its healing good news broke through to me! It's like, after some thirty years of stumbling my way intellectually and emotionally – seeing things as “history” dictated them – the Jesus of this Gospel reading came up to me and said: “Who says you're blind! You're not blind. Go wash the mud off your eyes and see the world and people - and yourself in the mirror - as luminous with grace, a depth to be cultivated, a Source beyond the distant Judge that makes everything suspect – including you.”

Of course such a world is beyond the range of many of the world's institutions designed to see danger at every turn – like the media or like pharmaceutical commercials or (and now very necessary) law enforcement/military establishments. Actually the Pharisees in today's reading play the role of watchmen. Jesus cures on the Sabbath – broke one of the maxims by which the whole infrastructure of a broken world is designed to hold things together. Anyone or anything like the Gospel that does break out of such a shadow world to let the light of grace in is a threat – even the parents of the man born blind hardly know him anymore. He seems more grown up than before.

Anyway, after going through cross examinations by the maintainers of the geodesic domes of fear that restrict our vision of what's truly true, what's authentic – I kind of ended up “thrown out”. And though unlike the fellow in today's reading who was fortunate enough to have eyes to see Christ in the flesh, I nevertheless know that every day “the one who is speaking to me is he.”

***Geoff Wood***