

Father Dave's Homily

10/28/12 30 B

-- Blindness is not simply a physical condition. You can have perfect 20/20 vision and be blind to certain things in life, often important things.

-- A young woman meets a guy who sweeps her off her feet. He turns on the charm, they date for a while, and he finally asks her to marry him. She joyfully says Yes, but soon notices alcohol on his breath, not just once but frequently. She hears rumors of his partying ways.

-- But she thinks he's still young and will settle down once he gets married. Soon after the wedding, however, his drinking increases. He starts to get verbally abusive, even threatens violence. Within a year or so, she's forced to leave him.

-- That young woman was blind to what was before her. She needed someone to lift her from her blindness, to help her to see clearly.

-- Like most Americans, I didn't think a great deal about what was taking place in Israel and the West Bank. I'd heard of the settlements and did not necessarily think everything Israel's government did was good, but I didn't make a big deal about it. After all, they were protecting themselves.

-- Then I went to the Holy Land, not for a quick visit but for three months. I saw the checkpoints people had to endure (even before the wall). I met Palestinians and found they were not monsters. Many were angry at the conditions they had to endure, but they were not violent. They wanted peace in their land.

-- I also met Israelis who were not all happy with what their government was doing. They wanted to live in peace with their Palestinian neighbors. But they felt trapped by events (e.g., bus bombings). They didn't like to engage in collective punishment, but didn't know how else to respond.

-- My eyes were opened to what was taking place there, as well as the eyes of most of those in the program at Tantur which I was attending. I

didn't come away with great solutions, but I could see the issues in that land with more clarity.

-- The blind man in our gospel wanted more than a cure from physical blindness. He wanted to be a part of the community, not just a beggar. He wanted to see God's power and especially God's love.

-- And he was willing to throw off the one possession he depended upon, his cloak. It kept him from freezing at night. It held the coins dropped by people who saw him begging. Those coins were his livelihood.

-- He left that behind to seek healing from Jesus. Can we throw off our crutches to seek Jesus' healing? Our crutch may be food or drink, resentment toward someone who's hurt us, an addiction that holds us back. To be open to Jesus we need to let it go.

-- The light of the Lord can enter our eyes, minds and hearts, just as surely as light entered the eyes of that blind man. It was so overwhelming he not only rejoiced but started to follow Jesus.

-- Jesus seeks to liberate us from whatever makes us blind to his love, healing and forgiveness. May we be willing to throw off the crutches which we think keep us secure but in fact blind us to God's love.

-- Then the light of Jesus will take over our very being. And, like the man in the gospel, we will follow him up the road of discipleship—the road that leads to eternal life.