

### Reflection 3/14/2010-Blind Man

Good Morning! For those of you who don't know me, my name is Christine Joseph and I am a senior at Presentation High School. I was asked to give you a reflection on today's Gospel. So who remembers what today's Gospel was about? (Blind Man). Yes, good job you were paying attention!

Yes, today's Gospel talks about the man born blind and how Jesus heals him and eventually gives him sight. But let's go backwards for a bit and take things word by word. When we think of the word *blind* what comes to mind? (Darkness, sightless, can't see, blocked, hopeless, pitiable)

Yes, it really seems hopeless when you can't see. Can you imagine just seeing black every single second of every single day? It really does seem depressing! But let's move on to our next word...what does sight mean? (seeing things, enlightenment, awakening) What does sight enable us to see everyday? (colors, light, human) Doesn't sight in a way allow us to see all things that are different? Everything that makes us different from each person? You see, sight does enable us to see so many positive things but it also allows us to many other things that we might not need to see.

Sight allows us to see color...not only in the varying forms on a rainbow, but varying forms on each person. Sight allows us to see gender, male and female. Sight allows us to see economic status. Now that we think about it, sight allows us see a lot of things but then we have to make judgments on them. We get such a load of sensory information that we have to make a perception on

each object/characteristic we see. And that's where our problem starts. We see, but we see too much. We are enlightened, but perhaps we are over-enlightened.

This passage is often used to say that we are blind...but in this case, I don't think that blind means that we can't see. I think it means that we see too much and that in and of itself, blinds us. It happens all throughout our society but it happens a lot in high school. I feel that subconsciously we all have a little table set up in our heads that has two columns. One labeled visual input, the other labeled corresponding behavior. For example I may get the input "wearing all black, tons of black eyeliner and nail polish, hair covering eyes, etc" and automatically I would go to the table in my head and infer that the person is "withdrawn, emotional, perhaps goth/emo, moody". We get so much information that we cannot simply accept it. We can't think that this person simply likes the color black. We have to make a judgment. We stereotype.

This phenomena of "too much sight" occurs out of high school. We see a *poor* person, we see a *mentally challenged* individual, we see an *Indian*. Yes, these may seem like normal observations but they are polluted with judgments already! They add unnecessary words rather than just saying I see a HUMAN. Plain and simple. I see a human, an individual full of dignity created in the image and likeness of God. We try to see everything that makes us different. We encourage uniqueness. But that should not cause us to forget that we are all essentially the same. The human genome is 99% identical to a chimp. It is that

1% difference between all of us that not only makes us human, but accounts for all the variations between us. Look around you, do you see how different we look? And yet that is only 1% of our DNA that allows for that variation. That 1% that has caused us to make so many judgments and caused us so much anguish throughout history. So our problem is not that we cannot see, but rather that we see too much. So the question or challenge I have for all you today is "How do I make myself blind to differences? How do I enable myself to see that we are all the same deep down under the surface? How do I see that we all want the same things? To feed our family, to find comfort, to celebrate in community, to love!". Earlier we said to be blind was pitiable, but is it really? It seems that we can be so much more enlightened by being blind rather than seeing. At the end of the gospel Jesus states, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, 'We see', so your sin remains". We see. We see way more than we need to see which is why we need to become blind. Not in the physical sense (I am not asking you to jab your eyes out) but in the figurative sense. And with that blindness we will continue on a path without sin, or with less sin than there was before. During this Lenten journey we are asked to carry a message of hope within our hearts but earlier we said that to be blind is hopeless. There is hope in blindness just like there is hope in everything. But sometimes you may just need to see within rather than looking out.

So at this time I would like you take the purple sheet on your seats and write down the response to the question I asked earlier. "How do I make myself

blind to differences? How do I enable myself to see the common thread which connects rather than the line which divides us?"

Once that is done, you can take your slip of paper to the platform surrounding the altar where there will be liturgical ministers with baskets.

Thank you.