

A couple of weeks ago a comet made the news. It was one people could see with their eyes. So I went out one night to Hidden Valley to the park as the sun set to see this comet. It got darker and darker, I could make out Venus and of course the moon. But where this comet was...I could not see. I was getting disappointed. I pulled out my binoculars, saw nothing. So I got my phone out and took a picture, and lo and behold, because of the way to adjust the light I saw it. And once I saw it and knew where to look I could begin to see it with my eyes. It was amazing. Then I knew where to look with the binoculars as well. It was spectacular. I could see with my eyes, but with the camera on the phone, it made it more so.

Archeologists use LIDAR to see ancient sites that normally cannot be distinguished by eyes. A device shoots lasers that can penetrate foliage or even debris, and makes out the patterns of ancient buildings. Then the teams can go and explore. Through this technique of seeing, they have recently found an ancient city on the Silk Road; and in the past years found cities in the Amazon in which they thought there had never been cities.

A stereotype that I kind of bristle at concerning Catholicism/Christianity: it is all about telling people what to do. Now, there is an element of truth by practice to this, unfortunately. Some people bend Jesus' life and teachings to their own power and use it to try to control others. But I don't think that is the heart of what Jesus teaches and has done.

One of the foundational moments for the Jewish people was their Exile in Babylon. The Southern Kingdom led by David's descendents was conquered by Babylon, their temple destroyed and the elite, the learned, the professionals were sent to live in Babylon. They were devastated because they thought God was defeated. They saw no hope. Yet, prophets arose like Jeremiah and Ezekiel who told them God was alive and God would bring them back, and renew the covenant. Also and more importantly they would see God in a different, more whole way. It happened. And from their return their religious practices changed, it had its more on scripture, it was the beginnings of Synagogue, Rabbis, Scribes.

As adults, have we ever gone back to a childhood place to see it again? Gone back to an old home that as kids we thought was huge and grand,

and as adults we see just how small it was. Or to our old schools and think “How did I ever fit into those tiny chairs?” We see our play areas in which we had so much fun, and now...

Our visión changes, how we see the world around us changes.

Jesus brings us a different vision for our world, for ourselves and how we can live in it, and live in our world more fully.

Jesus helps us to see and have a visión for our lives and our relationship to this world.

I think the core and beauty of our faith in Jesus is the visión for living that he offers, that he invites us to live. A positive affirmation of life.

Jesus reveals a vision of God as of compassion, a personal God, God the Father, the Abba, who loves and desires nothing but the best.

God is not one who is a distant abstraction that must be appeased through sacrifice.

Jesus reveals how to see God is relational, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and that we are invited into this relationship.

Jesus helps us to see that our lives are more full, more complete when we are connected and in right relationship to those around us, and of course to God. Not relationships based on appeasement and pleasing, but of mutuality and growth; of support, one that is life creating. We are connected to others and this world in ways we may not even grasp!

And it can be hard to see this. So much can get in our way..preconceived ideas, cultural bias, ignorance, wounds.

Jesus helps us to see what we may not see, or not see well.

Bartimaeus had some knowledge of Jesus, we can glean that from our Scripture. He cries out to him for help; and the people want him to be quiet. This blind beggar is what they see.

Jesus invites him to come over and asks him what he wants. He doesn't assume he knows. Maybe Bartimaeus would want some coins to help this family, maybe some food, who knows.

Bartimaeus makes his plea from his heart, he wants to see; believing that Jesus can give him the sight. Bartimaeus was transformed, and we know this because we know his name, which means he followed Jesus and was known by his followers.

Think what Bartimaeus would have seen and witnessed... Jesus loving those who were in need and hurting; Jesus giving of himself to die on a Cross to demonstrate his love of God and of us; and of course Jesus raised from the dead so that we can see that God's love, God's forgiveness has no limits.

We all have some knowledge of Jesus; but do we think he can help us see? See ourselves differently, others, God? In such a way as to live differently? Can we allow ourselves to see Jesus differently?

There is a depth, a wisdom in Jesus' teaching, his life, death and resurrection that help us to see our world and lives differently. We can see how humility helps us to experience more peace. How forgiveness helps us to heal wounds between us. How generosity and patience builds community.

Our prayers, our spiritual life is about seeing Jesus more fully and allowing ourselves to see life differently. We need to let Jesus give us a different approach to how we engage in life.

The Sacraments themselves shed light, they force us to see God, Jesus and life differently. They challenge us to see beyond the superficial, and to see the deeper meaning of life and our connection to God.

I hear from others, and to be honest sometimes within myself, "the way I am living just does not work anymore. We can't experience meaning or depth; we find life dull, uninspiring."

I get it.

Maybe then our prayer to Jesus becomes "Help me to see."