

December 11, 2016, Third Sunday of Advent, Mt. 11:2-11, by r.j.tusky--inspired by a friend.

“Are you the one who is to come or... should we look for another?”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time, there was a fellow by the name of Bob Edens, who was born blind. Despite his handicap (challenge), Bob went to college, had a wonderful wife & children, and was financially successful. Most people, when speaking about Bob, marveled at his accomplishments. Bob, however, not feeling ‘complete,’ wanted to see. For 40 years, he went to doctor after doctor in search of someone, who could give him the one thing that would give him a sense of ‘wholeness’ ... bring light into his literally, black world.

When Bob was fifty-one, he found a surgeon, who was willing to perform an experimental operation on his eyes. Feeling he had nothing to lose, Bob agreed to the procedure.

To make a long story short, the operation was a huge success. Speaking about the incredible experience of his being able to see for the first time in his life, Bob said:

“I never would have dreamed that yellow is so-o...yellow. I am amazed by yellow. But red... red is my favorite color. I just can’t believe ‘red.’ I can see the shape of the moon. I like nothing more than seeing a silver jet streak across the azure sky, leaving a vapor trail of white. At night, I look at the stars in the sky. Words could never describe how beautiful everything is.”

What is the relevance of Bob’s story with today’s scriptures, you ask?

Well ...I’m glad you asked that question!

Actually, there are two reasons for his story’s relevance:

1st, for 1,850+ years, the ‘Chosen People,’ i.e., from the time of Moses, waited to “see” Jesus. When Jesus finally did arrive, bursting forth into time & space on that 1st Christmas, even his own cousin, John the Baptist, questioned if he were **‘THE one’** that they had, so long, awaited.

In many of the Gospel accounts about the life of Jesus, we read about **“blind”** people. We hear how those, who were physically blind, came to see Jesus with **‘spiritual’** eyes.’ They saw him -- with ‘eyes of the heart,’ --for who he truly was, Emmanuel—‘God with us’...at last, the promised redeemer! He was **‘THE one’** whom Israel had awaited for all those generations! Because of their faith, Jesus gave them the gift of **‘physical’** sight! And, just like Bob Edens ...they were amazed!

BUT, many, like the Pharisees, were **‘spiritually blind’** to Jesus. He did not fit their expectations. They had awaited a **‘secular-savior-king.’** Yet, those who saw with the **‘eyes of the heart,’** recognized him. And, today, **‘they’** are our ancestors in faith!

2nd, since we have been born long after that 1st Christmas some 2,016 years ago, we all know how the **‘Christ-child,’** eventually, became **‘Christ-crucified,’** and that **‘Christ-crucified’** rose from the dead. We know with our eyes of faith, the **‘eyes of the heart,’** that he was born on Christmas, died on Friday, and rose on Sunday. Many of the details that occurred between those 3, pivotal points of his life, his birth/death/resurrection, we hear about, Sunday after Sunday. And, again, not unlike Bob Edens ...we are amazed!

Now, only 2 weeks before we celebrate that **'big day,'** we earnestly prepare: we drive in traffic, we stand in line, and we buy lots of gifts, often stretching the budget unmercifully. Maybe we've 'modernized' and shop 'on line,' driving ourselves crossed-eyed with cost-comparisons and those ever-elusive 'electronic-coupons.' We wrap, we decorate, we cook, and we bake. We visit and we are visited.

You know, if we are not very careful, after all the gifts have been exchanged, cookies have been eaten, decorations are put away, and visits have been visited ...the "**post-holiday blues**" might set in. Very possibly, we might be left with an empty feeling, a sense that we, somehow, missed something. We might even question what all the 'fuss' was about to begin with! We could feel very empty, exhausted, and depressed and ...not... even... know... why.

So, the Church gives us this Third Sunday of Advent, called **'Gaudete Sunday,'** to 'step back' and to take a **'spiritual breath'** at this point of the Advent Season. She wants us to breathe and smile...to be happy and to make sure we are spiritually prepared. It's supposed to be a **'joyful-expectation-moment'**. It's the reason for the rose-colored vestments this week. If we pay attention, we can adjust our eyes of faith, the **'eyes of the heart,'** if necessary. We might even undergo a kind of **'spiritual-eye-operation.'** You know, get a **'Jesus-fix!'**

In the joy of being halfway there ...to the **'big day,'** we are reminded to look inward, to examine **who we are** in relation to **who Jesus is**. All this 'fuss' ...is about ...the birth ...of a baby.

If we remember that **Jesus** is **'THE one,'** then, without a doubt, there will be no **'post-holiday blues.'** If we only stay focused, in the midst of all the noise and sparkle, we will see the truth, and, like Bob Edens ...we will be amazed... all over again!

I close with this simple prayer:

**With all my heart, I wanted to find Jesus.
So, I climbed to the highest steeple.
There, I heard his voice whisper:
"Go down again,
I dwell ...among ...the people!"**

During this last 2 weeks, prior to celebrating **his** birthday, stay focused.

Look inward ...with the **'eyes of your heart.'**

Jesus is there, inside you, inside your family ... 'among... his... people'!

May the eternal God, our Abba, bless you ...the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.