

The Light of God and Human Eyes

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FOURTH SUNDAY

1 Sm. 16:1, 4, 6-7, 10-13

Eph. 5:8-14

Jn. 9:1-41

«...**H**e spat on the ground and made

clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on [the eyes of the blind man].” It seems that the Master committed a solecism by means of his unconventional, annoying and even sacrilegious behavior, since no work was supposed to be done on the Sabbath. But in this way he provokes a debate that serves to flush out his interrogators, who quickly reveal themselves for what they are, prompting Jesus to conclude reprovingly: “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but you are saying, ‘We see,’ so your sin remains.”

One can only be amazed at the whole investigation made into the matter—an investigation constructed to deny reality. It reaches the point that a subtle irony seems to creep into the reply of the blind man who can now see and who shows himself to be a free person, certainly much more free than his scornful interrogators. His parents, instead, are pathetic and defensive. They are afraid to get involved in the situation and so they declare: “Ask him; he is of age,” almost as if they were trying to remove an impediment.

It is always possible to deny evidence; to avoid reality or, even more simply, to leave out a fact. This is what happens when a person is not receptive to the light of the truth because it goes without saying that what counts is the light, which does not depend on us. Nonetheless, it is our gaze that determines whether we are open or closed. The Master affirms: “I am the light” but the Pharisees remain stubbornly blind and, what is more, they are not even aware of their condition. The point is that if the light of God does not shine in us, then we end up denying reality. God is necessary if we want to see the world, others and ourselves through lenses that are not distorted by personal interests or fear. Without God, we are in the dark. We need his light because without it reality loses its attraction and beauty; it vanishes.

A verification of this is the ecological crisis, which has put the sustainability of our planet at risk. What has caused the depletion of our natural resources? What has turned the order of our ecosystem upside down? The short answer is that we have stopped looking at the earth as a gift of God to be cultivated and safeguarded, and instead have reduced it to a quarry from which to extract as much as possible. We have lost our sense of awe at the world because without God it is easier for us to reduce everything to utility and self-interest. We are no longer interested in protecting our intricate ecosystem nor do we seek to preserve it in view of the future. We have become short-sighted. And eyes deprived of light cannot see—neither the macrocosm nor the microcosm.

Faith is...

Fr. Domenico Pompili

*“a spark:
a lively flame that grows larger
and shines like a heavenly star within me.”*

(Cf. Divine Comedy, “Paradise,” Canto XXIV, 145-147)