



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



Father Laurence Kriegshauser
30th Sunday, Year B
October 25, 2009

The Bible speaks to us because it shows our world as such a mixture of good and evil with good triumphant. The Jews of the northern kingdom of Israel were exiled by Assyria because of their sins, their refusal to listen to the prophets sent by God. But Jeremiah says they will return in throngs from the ends of the earth, wherever they have been exiled. The blind and the lame along with pregnant mothers will be gathered in, led by God himself who will console them. He will guide them on a level road with springs of water to give them drink. He will be a father to those who had rejected him. Evil exists but the loving Father of Israel is greater than the evil.

Blindness itself is an evil not willed or created by God but introduced into the world when man turned away from God and the fullness of life. All sickness and death itself are painful realities that beset every human being. The Lord's answer was to suffer these himself and so eliminate their power to destroy us. If we suffer them now we suffer them with him, the one who triumphed over them in his resurrection from the dead. We share that triumph by sharing in this Eucharist. We do not cease to suffer and die, but these negative things are caught up in the desire of God to flood us with his life, and so we have the courage to face them, to accept them in hope. The Letter to the Hebrews expresses this suffering of sin in order to take it away as an act of priesthood on Christ's part. He can deal patiently with us who are ignorant and erring because he himself was beset by weakness. In accepting death for our sake he offered God a perfect sacrifice which took away our sin.

If the message of Scripture is truly to speak to us, we must enter fully into the experience of our weakness in order to experience the joy of redemption and of full restoration to the Father. It is through the experience of our weakness and sin that we encounter the healing God. By seeking to escape these painful experiences or to deny them we miss the saving God who is only found in them since he experienced them.

Christians do not have to deny sin or fear it. They openly acknowledge it, saying with Saint Paul, "I will glory in my infirmities, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me." It is their faith that saves them, as it was faith that prompted the blind Bartimaeus to cry out, "Son of David, have pity on me." From the depths of his misery he cried out to the one who could save him, received back his sight, and followed Jesus on the way. He is a model for us. From the depth of our own pain, let us cry out in trust to the Son of David and he will renew and strengthen us, raise us up with him to new life, both in this world and finally in the next. The Eucharist we are about to share is the foretaste of that experience of new life in which we will exult forever in heaven, where every tear will be wiped away. Those that sow in tears shall reap rejoicing.