

Lent Sunday IV A

Cardinal John Henry Newman was a professor at the Oxford University first, he was an Anglican priest. He started the Oxford movement but because he was sick and had a deadly fever he took a break. He was experiencing great physical and emotional despair. He wrote a beautiful hymn asking God for light.

“Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home; Lead thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see the distant scene one step enough for me”

Newman prayed to the God of light to lead him from darkness to light, from confusion to certainty and from sickness to health. God heard his prayer and led him home safely. In 1845 he got converted to the Roman Catholic faith.

Light and fire symbolizes God and His presence. In the Old Testament Moses met God in the Burning bush. When the people of Israel were journeying through the desert God was present with them at night in the form of the pillar of fire. In today's Gospel, Jesus makes a very bold assertion. He says I am the light of the world and then proceeds to give sight to a man born blind. When the blind man received his sight, he not only receives his vision but also the light of his faith. There is a progression in the light, of this blind man.

First the blind man began referring to Jesus as a man. He said to the Pharisees, the man called Jesus made mud and spread it on my eyes and I received my sight (John 9:11). He came to believe that Jesus was not a sinner, rather he was a man from God.

The second time, the blind man called Jesus a prophet. When the Pharisees asked him what he thought about Jesus, he replied, he is a prophet (John 9:17). A prophet is a person who is in close association with God. Prophet Amos said, “surely the Lord does nothing without revealing His secrets to his servants, the prophets” (Amos 3:7).

Last week we heard about The Samaritan woman, she confessed that Jesus was a prophet, because he revealed all her past life (John 4:9). Jesus is only person who knows all our secrets. He alone has the power to satisfy all our needs.

In the first reading we heard how God revealed to Samuel to anoint King David for his people of Israel. Samuel saw the seven sons of Jesse but God did not choose them. God chose the youngest son of Jesse who was tending the sheep. We need to remember, not as man sees, does God see. Because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart. Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed David in the presence of his brother and from that day on, the spirit of the Lord rushed upon David.

Thirdly a blind man came to confess Jesus as the son of God. Jesus asked the blind man; do you believe in the son of man? He answered, "who is he sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him". Jesus said to him, "you have seen him. And the one speaking with you is he". He said, "Lord, I believe", and he worshipped Him. The blind man readily accepted and confessed that Jesus is the son of man.

Fr. Ronald Knox says the more we know a person, the less attracted we feel towards that person. Familiarity stales sensation. But with Jesus it is not true. The more we come close to him, the more attractive he becomes. E.g. One lady has gone to the holy land for seven times.

St. Augustine was a great lover of Jesus. He kept on postponing his conversion, but once he got converted, he regretted his procrastination and said too late, "O ancient Beauty, have I loved thee".

My friends in Christ, may we hasten to Jesus without any delay, and let us pray for three things, Lord Jesus, help me to know you more clearly, to love you more dearly and to follow you more nearly.