

*FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT - MARCH 15, 2015*

*"I CAME INTO THIS WORLD ....SO THAT THOSE WHO DO NOT SEE MIGHT SEE, AND THOSE WHO DO SEE MIGHT BECOME BLIND"*

*JACQUES LUSSEYRAN WAS A BLIND FRENCH RESISTANCE FIGHTER AND HE WROTE ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES OF BEING BLIND IN A MEMOIR CALLED AND THERE WAS LIGHT*

*JACQUES WAS NOT BORN BLIND. HE WAS BORN IN 1924 AND AT THE AGE OF 7 HE GOT INTO A SCUFFLE AT SCHOOL AND FELL HARD AGAINST THE CORNER OF THE TEACHER'S DESK "DRIVING ONE ARM OF HIS GLASSES DEEP INTO HIS RIGHT EYE WHILE ANOTHER PART OF THE FRAME TORE THE RETINA IN HIS LEFT"*

*WHEN HE WOKE UP IN THE HOSPITAL, HE COULD NO LONGER SEE - AT THE AGE OF 7 HE WAS COMPLETELY AND PERMANENTLY BLIND... THIS WAS 1931.....*

*HIS FAMILY DECIDED NOT TO INSTITUTIONALIZE HIM...*

*THEY NEVER PITIED HIM OR DESCRIBED HIM AS UNFORTUNATE...*

*IN FACT, HIS FATHER GAVE HIM SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS:*

*"ALWAYS TELL US WHEN YOU DISCOVER SOMETHING"*

*AND BARELY TEN DAYS AFTER HIS ACCIDENT HE MADE A DISCOVERY THAT ENTRANCED HIM FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE....*

*HE WRITES "I HAD COMPLETELY LOST THE SIGHT OF MY EYES; I COULD NOT SEE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD ANYMORE.*

*YET THE LIGHT WAS STILL THERE."*

*ITS SOURCE WAS NOT OBLITERATED. I FELT IT GUSHING FORTH EVERY MOMENT AND BRIMMING OVER; I FELT HOW IT WANTED TO SPREAD OUT OVER THE WORLD. I HAD ONLY TO RECEIVE IT. IT WAS UNAVIDABLY THERE. IT WAS ALL THERE AND I FOUND AGAIN ITS MOVEMENTS AND SHADES, I.E. ITS COLORS, WHICH I HAD LOVED SO PASSIONATELY A FEW WEEKS BEFORE.*

*THIS WAS ENTIRELY NEW....IT CONTRADICTED EVERYTHING THAT THOSE WHO HAVE EYES BELIEVE.....THE SOURCE OF LIGHT IS NOT IN THE OUTER WORLD....*

*THE LIGHT DWELLS WHERE LIFE ALSO DWELLS: WITHIN OURSELVES... EVIDENTLY, WITH PRACTICE, HE LEARNED TO ATTEND SO CAREFULLY TO THE WORLD AROUND HIM THAT HE CONFOUNDED HIS FRIENDS BY DESCRIBING THINGS HE COULD NOT SEE....*

*E.G. HE COULD TELL TREES APART BY THE SOUNDS OF THEIR SHADOWS HE NOTICED THAT THE LEAVES OF AN OAK MADE A DIFFERENT SOUND IN THE WIND THAN THE NEEDLES OF A PINE....*

*MOST OF US DON'T PAY ANY ATTENTION TO THE SOUND OF A TREE SINCE WE CAN TELL TREES APART BY LOOKING....*

*SO WHO IS THE HANDICAPPED PERSON NOW???*

*THE PROBLEM WITH SEEING THE REGULAR WAY, LUSSEYRAN NOTES, IS THAT SIGHT NATURALLY PREFERS OUTER APPEARANCES....*

*IT ATTENDS TO THE SURFACE OF THINGS, WHICH MAKES IT AN ESSENTIALLY SUPERFICIAL SENSE.....*

***AND IT ALSO TENDS TO MOVE VERY RAPIDLY....***

***OFTEN NOT PAYING PROPER ATTENTION TO THE OBJECT...***

***WHEREAS USING FINGERS AS A GUIDE TO FEEL A TABLE, E.G. IS MUCH MORE INTIMATE WAY OF ATTENDING TO A TABLE....***

***NOTICING EVERY DETAIL OF THE TABLE - E.G. LIKE A CARPENTER***

***NOTICING CRACKS, DIPS***

***EVEN NOTICING THE TYPE OF WOOD BY ITS SOUND, E.G. WALNUT..***

***AS LUSSEYAN SAYS, "SINCE BECOMING BLIND, I HAVE PAID MORE ATTENTION TO A THOUSAND THINGS".....***

***IN JANUARY 1944, THE NAZIS CAPTURED JACQUES AND SHIPPED HIM TO BUCHENWALD WITH 2,000 OF HIS COUNTRYMEN...***

***EVEN THERE LEARNED HOW HATE WORKED AGAINST HIM - IT***

***DARKENED HIS WORLD AND MADE IT SMALLER....***

***WHEN HE LET HIMSELF BECOME CONSUMED ANTH ANGER, HE STARTED RUN INTO THINGS, SLAMMING INTO WALLS AND TRIPPING OVER FURNITURE....***

***WHEN HE CALLED HIMSELF BACK TO ATTENTION, THE SPACE BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF HIM OPENED UP SO THAT HE FOUND HIS WAY AND MOVED WITH EASE AGAIN.***

***THE MOST VALUABLE THING HE LEARNED WAS THAT NO ONE COULD TURN OUT THE LIGHT INSIDE HIM WITHOUT HIS CONSENT.***

***EVEN WHEN HE LOST TRACK OF IT FOR A WHILE, HE KNEW WHERE HE COULD FIND IT AGAIN...***

***IF WE COULD LEARN TO BE ATTENTIVE EVERY MOMENT OF OUR LIVES,  
HE SAID, WE WOULD DISCOVER THE WORLD ANEW.***

***WE WOULD DISCOVER THAT THE WORLD IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT  
FROM WHAT WE HAD BELIEVED IT TO BE.***

***EARLIER WE HEARD JESUS SAY: "I CAME INTO THIS WORLD FOR  
JUDGMENT SO THAT THOSE WHO DO NOT SEE MAY SEE, AND THOSE WHO  
DO SEE MAY BECOME BLIND".....***

***HOPEFULLY, HAVING REFLECTED ON THE LIFE AND EXPERIENCES OF  
JACKQUES LUSSEYRAN THAT STATEMENT WILL SOUND PROMISING TO  
US....***

***WE MAY NOW REALIZE HOW SEEING MAY HAVE MADE US BLIND - BY  
GIVING CHEAP CONFIDENCE THAT ONE QUICK GLANCE AT THINGS CAN  
TELL ME WHAT THEY ARE, BY DISTRACTING ME FROM LEARNING HOW  
THE LIGHT INSIDE ME WORKS, BY FOOLING ME INTO THINKING I HAVE A  
CLEAR VIEW OF HOW THINGS REALLY ARE -  
WHO CAN SEE RIGHTLY AND WHO CANNOT....***

***OF COURSE, WE ARE NOT ASKING TO BE BLIND....***

***BUT HIS REFLECTIONS MAY ALLOW US TO SEE IN WHAT WAY WE MAY  
ALREADY BE BLIND....***

***RECENTLY, I'VE REFLECTED ON THE FACT THAT I HAVE GRADUATE  
DEGREES IN THEOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY.....***

***I'VE BEEN MARIANIST FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS.....***

***AND I FEEL LIKE I'M IN KINDERGARTEN SPIRITUALLY.....***

*NEEDING TO ALMOST UNLEARN MUCH OF WHAT I'VE LEARNED.....*

*NOT THAT WHAT I'VE LEARNED IS NOT VALUABLE AND POSITIVE....*

*BUT I THINK I'M BEGINNING TO RECOGNIZE MY SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS*

*AND TODAY I CAN TRULY SAY THAT IS GOOD NEWS.....*

*I AM THAT BLIND MAN IN THE GOSPEL STORY*

*EACH OF US IS THAT BLIND MAN IN THE STORY*

*THERE IS SO MUCH WE ARE MISSING/ NOT SEEING - ESP SPIRITUALLY*

*AND WHEN WE RECOGNIZE OUR SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS WE CAN SAY IT IS*

*GOOD NEWS BECAUSE WE HEARD TODAY....*

*"I HAVE COME INTO THIS WORLD....SO THAT THOSE WHO DO NOT SEE,*

*MAY SEE....."*

*LET US ACKNOWLEDGE OUR BLINDNESS.....*

*LET US PRAY THAT WE MAY TRULY SEE.....*

*AND PERHAPS AS A WAY OF RECOGNIZING OUR OWN SPIRITUAL*

*BLINDNESS AND PRAYING THAT WE MAY TRULY SEE SPIRITUALLY....*

*LET US IN CONCLUSION - IF YOU WOULD LIKE....*

*CLOSE YOUR EYES FOR 30 SECONDS OR SO AND ASK THE LORD THAT YOU*

*MAY TRULY SEE MORE CLEARLY IN YOUR LIFE...*

*A SOURCE FOR THIS HOMILY -*

*C.F. LEARNING TO WALK IN THE DARK - BARBARA BROWN TAYLOR*

*CHAPTER - "THE EYES OF THE BLIND"*