

Voices: Believing is seeing with Christ's eyes

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It didn't take long for Solomon to befriend me. And even though we didn't speak the same language, we did speak. Sometimes, I caught him speaking to no one in particular.

In college, I spent a good deal of time in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, where I served at a children's home. I felt very nervous the first time I met Solomon. He had severe cerebral palsy that impacted his ability to walk, run and feed himself. I'm ashamed to admit I didn't know what to say or how to act around him at first.

He welcomed me with kindness, cracked jokes and wanted to sit with me in the afternoons. For a while, I didn't understand why he would talk to himself—sometimes for hours. Our friendship grew over the months, and I began to learn a bit of Haitian Creole.

One day, I heard Solomon say my name. I listened closely and realized he was praying for me. Correction: he was praying for all his loved ones. One by one and praising God. This is his daily ritual.

I have a friend who says the people we serve are our greatest teachers. Solomon is one of my greatest teachers. I thought I was going to Haiti to serve Solomon, but Solomon served me. I am forever grateful he opened my eyes.

Our sight impacts how we live

Ask anyone who wears corrective lenses: there are few things more

disorienting or overwhelming than the sensation of distorted vision.

I wore glasses for years. My nearsighted vision would unsettle me each morning until I could find my glasses. It was tough to concentrate in class without them. It was dangerous to drive. My time with glasses taught me that our sight impacts how we live.

Jesus talks about spiritually corrected vision in Matthew 13, saying, “Seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.” In contrast, Jesus encourages his friends, “But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear” (Matthew 13,16; NRSV).

Jesus asks his followers to see with kingdom perspective, not through the cultural or religious perspective of the time. When we see as Christ suggested, it compels a different way of living with respect to the people and communities around us. It beckons us to change how we relate to others.

Seeing with the eyes of Christ

Richard Rohr, in his book *Everything Belongs*, writes, “The ability to respect the outsider is probably the litmus test of true seeing.”

Rohr may be right. How do I view people who are different from me? How do I respond to individuals or groups who make me feel uncomfortable or who I cannot understand?

When we see with the eyes of Christ we see truly—not entirely unlike the man who Jesus healed in John 9. We celebrate the strengths of the humble and learn from people who are different from us. We are slower to judge and quicker to listen.

I’ve noticed that when I am blessed with the opportunity to see with a new

perspective, even for a moment, the Holy Spirit convicts me of my foolishness. What a joy it is to learn from others, and what a hindrance it is to stay stuck in my own perspective.

Rohr also writes: “Can you see the image of Christ in the least of your brothers and sisters? He uses that as his only description about the final judgment. Nothing about commandments, nothing about church attendance, nothing about papal infallibility; simply a matter of our ability to see.”

Can we see Christ on the street?

Can we see Christ in prison?

Can we see Christ on the border?

Yes, we can see, but will we see?

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