

## Vision and Faith

On this third Sunday after Pentecost, we are offered powerful instruction and great hope from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (6:22-33):

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness. No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Our life is a journey, and we are given the gift of free will to choose the path we take. We use our eyes to fixate on a chosen path before we trod. Where we fixate our gaze is influenced by what we desire, goals we set, satisfaction of needs and what we choose to believe. Therefore, we select the path that is worthy of our attention, and our effort. But since the fall of our forefather Adam, the world has been immersed in deception, (as the same force that originally deceived Adam is just as active today, working to deceive each and every one of God's created humankind). Because of the dominance of the forces of evil, the world has sunk into a perpetual state of spiritual darkness. Our Saviour offers the salvific path and enlightens it for us trod:

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (John 8:12)

Although we are not endowed with the gift of clairvoyance, we have the capacity to rationally project and establish future goals that drive our actions. A farmer will labor arduously to accommodate

upcoming seasonal changes; a college student will study and discipline his time to acquire a degree and secure a career; an athlete will train and make personal sacrifices to achieve the goal of successful completion of a competition. Goals can also be established to avoid danger and hardship, like seeking preventative medical care and making lifestyle changes to ensure a longer, healthier life. We maintain daily goals of basic satisfaction of our and our family's needs, i.e. food, shelter, clothing, safety, etc. Establishing goals and working towards their attainment is part of our "fiber", our human nature. Therefore, the successful attainment of our chosen goals is something we actively "seek", where we choose to fixate our gaze and determination, and apply our energies, talents, and efforts.

Our Saviour, the Knower of our true needs, and the Light of the [darkened] world, beseeches us:

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

This is, in effect, a profound and far-reaching promise. And, as we know from Holy Scripture and the lives of the saints, our Saviour (*I am the truth* – John 14:6) keeps His promises. But, for our part, this requires fundamental, uncompromising and unconditional trust, namely, **faith**... something that is difficult for our self-willed and self-reliant nature to generate and maintain.

When an army is about to attack an adversary, it sends out aircraft for surveillance and gathers intelligence to ascertain the position and vulnerabilities of the enemy. Also, a doctor will sometimes order tests, scans, etc. to fully decipher an accurate diagnosis before proceeding with appropriate therapy. Namely, the more information that is available, (or, data, using modern parlance), the better equipped we are to make appropriate decisions, prioritize choices, and establish worthy goals. Each of us is inclined to carefully research variables, pros and cons, before we commit to a specific important position and related action. But, in this darkened world that is saturated with deception and false truths, we have serious limitations in what we can decipher by ourselves. God, Who sees "the big picture", and is the **Knower of all**, and fervently desires that each of us is eternally united with Him, certainly knows our true needs, (present and future), better than we can possibly know. Such an awareness, (difficult for our pride driven human nature to fully embrace), should cement our trust and faith in Him as our principle guide, our light, our salvation.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as we navigate through this complex and stress-provoking plethora of challenges that represents life in this corrupt and darkened world, let us be strengthened and reassured by the profound and unshakable promise of our all-loving Saviour, and always... seek **first** the kingdom of God!

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.