

Seeing People As They Are

14th Sunday Ordinary Time July 6/7, 2024 Dcn John Bauch

Hi, it's good to be back among you. As I look around, I see a lot of familiar faces – all still sitting in your assigned seats I see...I had cataract surgery last week on my left eye. It's healing just fine and they'll do the right eye in a few weeks. In the meantime, it does give me an interesting perspective on the world. You all look different to me depending upon which eye I use. You appear much brighter and with greater clarity with my left eye than my right and I'm surprised at how bright the world really is. The right eye is significantly darker, and everything has a yellow hue. And before the surgery I thought that I was seeing the world as it truly was, just as the people in Jesus' hometown thought that they too were seeing everything just fine, as it truly was. They knew who Jesus was, after all, they had watched him grow up. They knew what he should look like, and they believed that there was nothing there that could surprise them, or so they thought. They were not prepared to be surprised to see him as he truly was, and they rejected the change that had taken place in him. Today's Gospel is all about seeing people as they are, not who we think they are, or should be, or want them to be, or even expect them to be. It takes time and energy to really get to know someone. It is so much easier to put people in a box and assume that we know everything about them based upon how they look or where they are from. I do it, we all do it. Like cataracts, over time we build up assumptions about how the world and the people in it work. If you catch yourself saying to someone "likewise I'm sure", that should give you pause and make you ponder what sort of box you have put them in. And what box they have put you in. After all, it works both ways. The problem with boxes is that we miss so much, so much that would surprise us if we actually took the time to slow down and get to know the people around us. And when we do this, we might be surprised when we start to see the world as it truly is, as God sees us, that we are all his beloved children that He has created with love. I'm an introvert and I freely admit what I'm proposing is scary. But it is worth the effort, start with the people here in the pews with you or in the gathering space after mass. If that's too big, start smaller and the next time you are in line at Cub or Target, simply smile at someone and see what happens. I think that you will be surprised, and the world will be a better place when we believe that it is still capable of surprising us and see one another as God sees us.