

3rd Sunday After Pentecost - "The Eye is the lamp of the body..." June 25, 2017

What is our Savior talking about when he says that the eye is the lamp of the Body? In the Gospel, it is written that Jesus Christ our Lord is the lampstand. The eyes that the Lord is speaking about are the eyes of our heart, our inner eyes. If our heart is pure, full of love, full of forgiveness and humility, then we are filled with light. God is light. The Holy Spirit is light. If, however, our hearts are obscured by prejudice, hatred, lust, self-conceit, jealousy, then we will be full of darkness. Evil is darkness. Satan is darkness. It says in today's Gospel, "where your heart is, that is where your treasure is." You cannot serve two masters. You cannot serve God and mammon. What is mammon? Mammon was an ancient God of wealth. Jesus chooses the idol mammon to represent not only riches, but the greedy pursuit of gain and any other worldly possessions, or food, or clothing, or cars, or anything else that we love more than we love our Lord. So we all truly and above all things worship either God or this world. There is no in between. There is only the one or the other. Jesus is very clear about this. If we call ourselves Christian, than Christ must be our consuming love and desire, as Jesus says, our true treasure. Not money or possessions, but God, and the pursuit of God, the pursuit of purity, repentance, and goodness, love, kindness, generosity, forgiveness. Where your heart is, that is where your treasure is. You cannot serve two masters.

Fr. Anthony Coniaris says that we see as we are. The painter sees the world in color, the sculptor in form, the musician perceives the world in sounds. Show two people the very same picture, and each will see something different in it. There is a story about a king in an ancient kingdom who chose a good man and a bad man from among his people. To the good man he said, "Go into the kingdom and find an evil man." The good man searched and searched, but he could find no evil man. To the bad man the king said, "Go into the kingdom and find a good man." The bad man too, searched and searched, but he could find no good man. We see as we are. Why was it that only the Wise men saw the star? Because only they were looking for the star. Why was it that only the Elder Simeon and the prophetess Anna recognized Jesus as the savior of the world when the Mother of God brought the child Jesus into the temple on the 40th day? Because only they were expectantly looking for Him.

What is inside us is all important. If we do not have God on the inside, we shall never see Him on the outside. If we have Him inside, we cannot help but see Him on the outside. If we have Him inside, we cannot help but see Him everywhere: in every bird, in every sunset, in every tree, in every fellow human being who hungers and thirsts. If we are unclean inside, our entire vision will be distorted and we shall see people and things not as they are, but as distortions of our hatred and envy. Pointing at a neighbor's wash in the back yard, a housewife said, "Just look at those clothes on the line—so gray and streaked!" A friend replied, "It looks to me as if the clothes are very clean. It is your windows that are dirty.

If life looks cloudy, maybe it's our windows that need cleaning. Jesus is always calling on us to keep the windows of the soul clean through daily self-examination, repentance, and confession. If we don't, we shall be constantly seeing others not as they are but as we are—hateful, envious, conceited, selfish. Better keep yourself clean and bright. You are the window through which you must see the world. And Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Amen.