

March 26, 2017
4th Sunday of Lent

The Lord anointed my eyes, I went, I washed, now I see
Rejoice, all who feel lost. Be joyful. Exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

Our Destiny

Consoling, isn't it. "To see" is our destiny; it's our true nature and condition. We all long to see - on so many different levels. So, how do we get there? Certainly not on our own, not by our own efforts. There is no such thing as a "spiritual self-made person."

The Law of Three

We get there through interacting with an "other." There is a three-fold interaction that moves blindness to sight, that moves from the partial to the whole. This is what Jesus was showing in today's Gospel with the man born blind. Sin was not punishment for this man's blindness, for He said, "*Neither this man nor his parents sinned. His blindness is so that the works of God might be revealed through him.*" In other words, the glory of God (*One*), joined with this man's desire to see (*Two*), merged into sight (*Three*).

This is true of all movement. There is a threefold-interaction between opposites that opens into something new. Any object isolated from another remains totally inert with no movement possible beyond the present self. The early Greek Fathers in the first five centuries of the church described this mutual moving as "Trinity," meaning "dancing" - not dancers, dancing.

Examples can help here, especially since this is wandering into such unfamiliar territory.

- † Mary's Garden: seeds (*One*) communing with soil (*Two*) blossom into flowers
- † Fear (*One*) communing with Faith (*Two*) opens Trust (*Three*)
- † Despair (*One*) communing with Faith (*Two*) releases Hope (*Three*)
- † Alienation (*One*) communing with Faith (*Two*) launches Love (*Three*)

This mutual embracing we call - Grace; refusing to do so we call - Sin. Sin forfeits anything new and seeks to destroy anything that opposes. We see this acted out in our politics, our economics, our relationships - even in our religion - seeing the opposite as an enemy, not as an opportunity. One can only imagine how greatly the political and religious culture wars of our era could be eased by the simple courtesy of this Law of Three.

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The reality of mutual giving (*One*) and receiving (*Two*) revealing something new (*Three*) is the law of the universe. This dance is expressed in many ways: the arts, stories, work, music, sports, even humor - even humor.

Oblate Fr. Ronald Rolheizer once observed: *“In everyday experiences, we have intimations of the divine, hints that there is something more than just the ordinary. One of those experiences, he says, is the phenomenon of laughter. In laughter, we intuit that there is something in us that is above a situation, transcendent to it.”*

German Jesuit Karl Rahner agrees, *“Laughter foretells our final state in heaven where we will be in exuberant joy. When Jesus says blessed (One) are you who are now weeping (Two) for you shall laugh (Three), ‘it is the happiness of the final state that will not just dry away our tears and bring us to peace, it will also bring us to laughter and the intoxication of joy.’* Laughter manifests that we are on good terms with reality.

Laughter is three-dimensional. It comes from foisting a blatantly incongruous link between opposites (*One* and *Two*) provoking laughter (*Three*).

† My grandpa started walking five miles a day when he was 60 years old. Now he's 97, and we don't know where he is.

† A German lighthouse in the north Atlantic was caught one night in the middle of a violent storm. Suddenly a distress call came in - *“Mayday! Mayday! Help! Mayday! We are sinking! We are sinking! Mayday! Mayday!”* And the German on duty responded, *“Mayday! Mayday! Mayday! Vat are you sinking about?”*

† The young couple invited their elderly pastor for Sunday dinner. While they were in the kitchen preparing the meal, the minister asked their son what they were having. *‘Goat,’* the little boy replied. *‘Goat?’* replied the startled man of the cloth. *‘Are you sure about that?’* *‘Yep,’* said the youngster. *‘I heard Dad say to Mom, today is just as good as any to have the old goat for dinner.’*

† A group of parishioners from St. Mary went on a hot air balloon ride, and they came down in a tree. They looked down and saw two men walking along. The people cried out, *“Where are we?”* And the men said, *“You are in a tree.”* *“Oh,”* they said, *“you must be Jesuits.”* And the two said, *“Why yes, how did you know?”* And they said, *“Well, if what you say is true, it’s completely useless.”*

† In a convent in Ireland, the 98-year-old Mother Superior lay dying. The Nuns gathered around her bed trying to make her last journey comfortable. They tried giving warm milk to drink but she refused it. One of the nuns took the glass back to the kitchen. Then, remembering a bottle of Irish Whiskey that had been received as a gift the previous Christmas, she opened it and poured a generous amount into the warm milk. Back at Mother Superior's bed, they held the glass to her lips. The frail Nun drank a little, then a little more and before they knew it, she had finished the whole glass down to the last drop. As her eyes brightened, the nuns thought it would be a good opportunity to have one last talk with their spiritual leader. *“Mother,”* the nuns asked earnestly, *“Please give us some of your wisdom before you leave us.”* She raised herself up in bed on one elbow, looked at them and said: *“DON'T SELL THAT COW.”*

The incongruous (*One*), between Opposites (*Two*), evokes Laughter (*Three*). This is a marvelous analogy for the Law of Three we call Trinity. It is the law of our lives. Let us not be afraid to embrace all of life, the difficult as well as the pleasant. It is the embracing of this three-fold communing in our lives that will move us from blindness to sight.

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