

“Master, I want to see.” What a rich and powerful prayer from today’s Gospel that all of us can utter before our Lord Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, Who dispels the darkness of our hearts and minds and enables us to truly see as *He* sees.

Brothers and sisters, spiritual blindness is one of the most destructive diseases of our time. Spiritual blindness prevents us from truly seeing God and our neighbor and therefore it prevents us from truly *loving* God and our neighbor. As disciples of Christ, not only are we called to see God *and* our neighbor but to see God *in* our neighbor and therefore to *do* the will of God by loving and embracing our neighbor with an intense divine love.

One form of spiritual blindness is the blindness caused by extreme political partisanship and the pure hatred for others than it can foster. Brothers and sisters, let me say clearly and unequivocally: as disciples of Christ, we are called to love and respect *every* human person from conception until natural death. This means that there is *absolutely no room* for *any form* of hatred against others in our lives, especially on the basis of religion, race, and politics! And to emphatically spell this out

even more: Hatred against *any* person, for *any* reason, whether they're Jewish, Christian, Muslim, atheist, Republican, Democrat, conservative or liberal, is *absolutely wrong* and *totally contrary* to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hatred of other human beings because of their race or religious and political beliefs can breed violence, and despicably, this is what we've seen in our increasingly polarized and divided country.

I can't help but think of yesterday's horrific attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, where 11 Jewish worshippers were brutally murdered and 6 injured as a terrorist opened fire on the innocent congregation. Our hearts and prayers are with the victims and their families and as Catholics, we lovingly stand in solidarity with our Jewish brothers and sisters as they mourn the loss of those murdered in this heinous attack.

Brothers and sisters, hatred of others and violence against the innocent *for any reason* has *absolutely no place* in our society, our country, and our Church. I don't know about you, but I'm personally sick and tired of the increasingly uncivilized, irrational, disrespectful, and hateful tone and tenor of our political culture. Family, friends, and

co-workers hating and rejecting each other—being torn apart—over their political differences. People de-friending and blocking each other on social media because of their political differences or divergent opinions. It's out of control!

Whatever happened to the great American tradition of debate—where people of opposing views can peacefully come together and engage in a passionate, open, honest, and yet civilized and respectful exchange of ideas, opinions, and rational arguments? Why is it that many people now with different political views and opinions are screaming at each other, yelling obscenities and *immediately* assuming the worst about the other? Brothers and sisters, it has to stop! This destructive form of spiritual blindness that prevents one from seeing the intrinsic dignity, value, and worth of the other is wreaking havoc on our culture and on peoples' lives.

A tragic element of this problem is that many are choosing *partisanship* over *discipleship*. Many are putting their partisan political agendas and tribal allegiances over their relationship with and fidelity to Christ and His Church. I've said it before and I'll say it again: the

essence of discipleship is *total conformity to Christ and His Church*, *not* having Christ and His Church conform to *my life, my sinfulness, my selfishness, my partisan political ideology and agenda*, etc.

We are *so* quick to express *our* desires, *our* will, and *our* demands, and yet we're *so* slow to ask: but what does *Jesus* desire and what is *His will*? *Jesus' will* is that we should strongly reject all forms of hatred against others for whatever reason and love and respect *every human person* from conception until natural death. *Jesus' desire* is that we should lovingly cherish and protect *every* human life from conception until natural death. *Seeing as Jesus sees enables us to see God in our neighbor, especially* those whom we vehemently disagree with and the weakest, the most vulnerable, and the most defenseless among us who have no voice.

Brothers and sisters, if we're going to condemn and reject violence against the innocent, then we *must be morally consistent* and condemn and reject *all forms of violence against the innocent*, whether it's against pre-born children in the womb or Jewish worshippers at a synagogue in Pittsburgh.

Now before I continue, I'd like to say to anyone who's either had or been involved in an abortion that our Lord Jesus loves you with an infinite and perfect love and He reaches out to you with His healing mercy and compassion. Through wonderful resources and ministries like Project Rachel, Rachel's Vineyard, and the global Silent No More Awareness Campaign, post-abortive women and men can discover that that there is hope, healing, and forgiveness. And *everyone here* must know that there is *no sin too great* for God's infinite mercy and love, which overcomes *all* evil! There is *no wound too great* for God's saving and healing grace!

Brothers and sisters, if we're able *to see as Jesus sees*, then we would see *all children*, born and pre-born, as gifts from God that should be cherished and protected. Clear spiritual sight in Christ would enable one to see clearly that the sexual abuse of children and the systematic, deliberate killing of innocent pre-born children are two barbaric and heinous crimes that are cut from the same cloth of pure evil. They are both intrinsically evil. The deliberate and brutal killing of an innocent pre-born child through a direct abortion is undoubtedly one of the most

grotesque forms of child abuse. Realistically, *what is worse* than deliberately and brutally killing an innocent and defenseless pre-born baby?

Brothers and sisters, as disciples of Christ, we must be cured of our spiritual blindness so that we can see as *Jesus sees*. And if we can see *as Jesus sees*, then we should love *all human beings* as Jesus loves *them*! If we see as Jesus sees, then we will see political opponents, not as enemies, but as human persons are who loved into existence by God.

If we see as Jesus sees, then we must be morally consistent and seek to protect *all* children, *born and pre-born*, from all violence and abuse. If we allow Christ to open our eyes, than we would be able to see the plight of the weakest and most vulnerable in our society, *especially* the pre-born, the elderly, the disabled, the poor, and the sick. If we allow Christ to open our eyes, then we would *refuse* to vote for politicians who support intrinsic evils like the legalized, systematic killing of innocent pre-born children through abortion-on-demand, which only perpetuates a culture of violence against the innocent.

As we prepare to worship and receive our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist—our merciful Savior Who *is* the Light of the World—let's plead with the Lord to cure our spiritual blindness so that we may see as *He sees* and love *all* human beings as *He loves them*, rejecting all forms of hatred and neglect of others, especially those with whom we disagree and the weakest, most innocent, and most vulnerable among us.