

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus”

Homily, March 29, 2009 – Deacon Colleen Spaeth

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Those are the words that we hear from the Greeks first to Philip and then to Andrew. “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” And when the two disciples go to Jesus and tell him that the Greek folk are outside waiting to see him, Jesus is already focused on the future, His future, he’s not really granting audiences right now.

Wouldn’t you like to see Jesus? If you could, would you too be like the Greeks, ready to see the guy that’s going to end all the bologna that been going on, that’s going to take over, crush the enemies, stomp out all the opponents, make things nice and comfy for everybody?

Well, as we know that’s not the historical Jesus. Jesus was about to die and it won’t be pretty. It will be ugly, horrible, tragic and undeserved.

Scripture tells us that if we are to follow Jesus, if we are to be faith-full we are to take up our cross and follow Jesus, our own cross.

You have heard the story, I am sure, of the lady that is not having the best of days. She starts having a conversation with

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus”

Homily, March 29, 2009 – Deacon Colleen Spaeth

God, “ hey God, how come my life is so difficult? Why can’t I have a break for just once? Let somebody else carry my cross for a while.”

She no sooner gets the words out of her mouth and an angel appears. God has heard her plea, and she is invited to the cross room, to exchange her cross for another. She is so excited as she enters the room and lays her own cross against the wall.

Okay, says the angel, pick a new cross. It’s kinda like the Goldilocks story for a bit, oh, no, this one is too large, this one too small, this one too tall, this one feels thick – the lady carefully makes her way around the room. After ruminating on the crosses, she eventually finds the one she wants against the wall by the door. “I’ll take this one! Why are you smiling, Angel?” The angel has a pensive look and says, “ well, that’s the one you came in with.”

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus”

Homily, March 29, 2009 – Deacon Colleen Spaeth

If our life were our cross, what does your cross look like? What are the positives of your cross? You know the negatives, probably, but do you know the negatives?

I brought some props with me today of my cross. Here's my first prop, my wheelchair. Now when I was struck with transverse myelitis I was told that this snazzy red chair would be a permanent part of my life, that I would have to learn to get around in my chair, this was my new life. I was a paraplegic. So for a while I took that as my truth and I learned how to get around in my wheelchair. Nowadays I use the chair when my son needs sneakers at the Cherry Hill Mall and the two stores he likes to buy from are at opposite ends of the mall, so there he has to push me. I went along pretty well by myself in my chair, but then I learned that I needed people to help me get around.

There was also a very valuable lesson from my wheelchair time. I learned that while sitting in my chair I could only look ahead. There was no looking back, or around, just ahead. That was a very moving experience for me. Behind me, symbolically lay all my regrets, things done and left undone. People I had hurt, things I could have done better. But I could not focus on

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus”

Homily, March 29, 2009 – Deacon Colleen Spaeth

that, I could only see ahead of me, where I was going. So while I was handicap, while I had to use a wheelchair, I learned the advantages of my chair along with the disadvantages as well.

My next prop is my walker. When I realized that my will was much stronger than my doctor’s diagnosis, I stood up and amazed them all, and after long days of therapy, almost 60 days worth, five days a week, I graduated to a walker. Now you may remember my first walker, just your run-of-the-mill walker, customized with tennis balls on the back two legs, so I could move more smoothly through the paths.

Again, the disadvantages were there, I was still “handicap” in the eyes of most society. The advantages were I slowed down, and again, like the wheelchair, I was forced to look and focus on being just straight ahead forward looking. I could not look where I had been, I could not turn and look backwards, and continue going ahead.

Now I have this new snazzy blue walker, my favorite color, by the way, that an attorney friend of mine picked up for me in Delaware. Now it’s got a seat, isn’t that cool? If I get tired, I can stop immediately and rest. I’ve got brakes if I going too

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus”

Homily, March 29, 2009 – Deacon Colleen Spaeth

fast. I’ve got a pouch to carry my necessisites, and a little cup holder for my tea. How lucky am I. The other day at Mother Debbie’s birthday party, while they were scrambling around for enough chairs, I had my one, just put it down, and right away I am eating away at my chocolate cake. How cool is that?

Don’t’ feel sorry for me, I am doing okay, you see?

And now, on good days I get around with just a cane. Now I can’t handle a cane alone, because I fall on uneven surfaces, for instances where the floor slants and is cracked or the sidewalk changes, I can fall easily. So I have to ask for help. Often I have the help of a very handsome fella (Rob comes forward) and he will consent to lending me his arm to lean on so that I can walk more independently with my cane.

You see, the hardest part of all of this is that before my “incident” I was a very independent cuss, never one to ask for help, always forging ahead and multi-tasking on my own. I never “NEEDED” anybody. Strong willed, that was me.

And now? Well, now I have to be vulnerable, I have to be willing to ask for help, I have to be willing to accept help when offered and when needed. That has always been a very hard

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus”

Homily, March 29, 2009 – Deacon Colleen Spaeth

lesson for me my whole life. So I am learning to live with this new cross, along with a little help from some friends. And it's all good.

Are there some bad days? Sure, the pain is really bad some time, the nerve pain is the worst, but I am vertical, and that's a good thing. I am lucky. And blessed.

But this is just my story. My story is no more important than yours. What does your cross look like? What is your handicap? Mine is apparent, is yours? Or is yours not so easily seen with the human eye? Have you lost your job? Is your marriage suffering? Are you trapped in a marriage you never wanted in the first place? Have you been divorced? Are you or somebody you love suffering with cancer or some other scary disease? Are you gay? Alcoholism? Are you about to lose your home? Is your child sick? Have you buried your parents? Your spouse? Are you suffering from depression? Are you unhappy and you don't know why?

Worse yet, are you walking the road ALONE? What does your cross look like? Have you told anyone about it? Or are you one

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus”

Homily, March 29, 2009 – Deacon Colleen Spaeth

that can carry your cross and not look like it to the masses? You don't NEED anybody else?

And if you know your cross, do you know all about it? Have you looked at its upside?

Truth is we are all handicapped in one form or another. If truth be told it would be a good thing, I think, if we came in and out thru the handicap ramp. Much more honest, wouldn't you think?

We all, my brothers and sisters, have stuff going on, and that's the GOOD NEWS! That's what makes us human, that's what keeps us coming and looking for more, more answers, more questions. We come here Sunday after Sunday, if we're honest about it, because we believe there's something to this idea of pursuing and growing in faith.

If we wish to follow God there are crosses in our future as well. If we seek to have faith at the center of our lives and that of our family, we can not cling to life and what we think makes us happy, we have got to be willing to LET GO LET GOD.

“Sir, we wish to see Jesus”

Homily, March 29, 2009 – Deacon Colleen Spaeth

We have heard it all before, but the truth is we must trust in something other than ourselves. If we desire real meaning and purpose in our life, we must give it all up, if we want purpose in our life, we must see God’s face first. We must be prepared to find that God’s desire for us will be different than our own, and in the end far better. It is just the way we are wired, it is the way that God has designed and engineered us to run, he has written it upon our hearts, and serving God and others is the only way to truly find out our purpose, by putting ourselves second, we get to first base.

**“Sir, we wish to see Jesus, Sir, we wish to see
Jesus, Sir ...”**